

Holly Lodge High School, College of Science

Holly Lodge High School College of Science is located in Smethwick, in the West Midlands. With around 1,500 students aged 11-18, the co-educational school aims to provide a diverse education through a wealth of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities.

When they wanted to enable any time, any where learning via a single sign-on for their students, the Team at Holly Lodge approached several potential suppliers. Here's why they chose Virtue Technologies...



The Challenge

In 2009, Holly Lodge took advantage of a central government scheme that provided free laptops to children. This enabled their students to have shared use of 300 of them. To ensure that accessing applications and work was as straightforward as possible Holly Lodge wanted to provide the same experience for a student logging on at home, as in the classroom. Essentially, they wanted students to have the same personalised desktop, data and network shares, irrespective of the device or location.

After looking at a number of suppliers, Holly Lodge's Leadership and IT Teams weren't impressed with the technological solutions they were offering. Holly Lodge had concerns about these potential IT providers understanding of the problem as well as their capability to provide a cost-effective solution.

After they'd almost given up searching for a provider, they were approached by Virtue at an event. We promised to help them find the right platform to support their access requirements.



I was very impressed with Virtue right from the initial meeting. They demonstrated an understanding of our requirements and budget from the outset.

I've never had an IT provider that works the way Virtue do. I was really impressed that they wanted to collaborate and work with us to design and implement the solution, it meant we could ensure it was perfect for us.

Virtue have proved that they've got the skills and experience to provide us with all the support we need."

- Pete Chatwin, Network Manager,
Holly Lodge High School, College of Science

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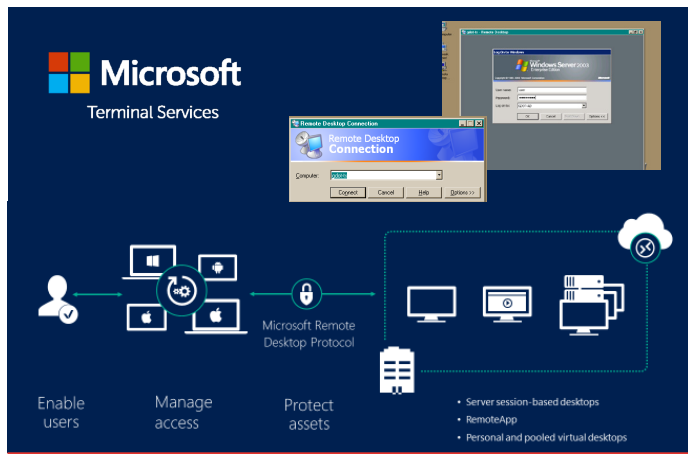
Time Project

100%

Completed On Time & In Budget

0

Hidden Costs



The Benefits

Here at Virtue Technologies, we've had many years' experience of helping secondary schools successfully implement and manage complex ICT solutions. We work in partnership with the school, and build quality relationships in order to understand objectives and how to achieve them.

We believe an investment in ICT offers schools' a cost-effective way of providing students with a rich and varied learning environment. Improvements in technology have reduced the complexity and cost of delivering remote access to programmes and work for both students and staff, even when they're away from the school premises.

This, in turn, provides opportunities for students to enhance their own learning and take it beyond the classroom. Holly Lodge seized the opportunity to enable students to learn from anywhere and adopt their own learning styles, making them more prepared for the world of work when problem solving, or equally developing their self-study skills for further education.



The Solution

Holly Lodge Network Manager, Pete Chatwin, felt that the best way to ensure their students could maximise the potential of their new laptop investment was to provide a single point of entry for all ICT use. They wanted usage for staff and students to be seamless, and provide the same experience whether they were working in the classroom or at home.

When we were initially scoping out a solution for Holly Lodge, we looked at the Sun Secure Global Desktop platform. However, we soon realised this would prove too costly to implement at Holly Lodge. After further discussions with IT Lead Pete, we realised that their existing licensing arrangements already gave them access to Microsoft Terminal Services. With alterations to the configuration, this would provide all the functionality they required.

Terminal Services Gateway (TS Gateway) is software that enables school users to access their resources securely via any internet connected device, subject to staff and students having the appropriate school security permissions. It makes a connection between the remote user on the internet and the school's internal applications, resources and student's own files and folders.



The entire solution provides a greatly improved experience. We've been able to securely provide all the network resources through Terminal Services Gateway. This means that everything is the same for the students irrespective of where they log on. They enter the same user name and password and can save work and access all the applications they need, at home or at school."

- Pete Challinor, Senior Engineer, Virtue Technologies



Building a Platform for Growth

To further support the changes, Virtue's technical team configured and installed Microsoft Internet Security and Acceleration (ISA) Server.

This integrated security solution helps protect their school network from internet-based threats, while also providing the system users with fast and secure remote access.

The system went live late in 2009, and Holly Lodge students began enjoying and embracing the benefits just a few months later. They were quickly able to work seamlessly between work and home, enabling more teachers to adopt a flipped learning model.

Our expertise enabled us to deliver this solution:

- Translating the requirements and needs of Holly Lodge's Senior Leadership Team into a technical solution, which has enabled them to enhance the way their students learn
- Through an engineer who specialises in this area, rather than a generalist
- Via a schedule, defined with Holly Lodge. Our experience in education means we understood we had to be on-time and work around their school needs and holidays
- With no hidden or extra costs, we provided fixed cost pricing for this project