Data#3

Eastside Lutheran College Supports Modern Learning with A+ Technology Solution

A Data#3 Customer Story

Data#3

ABOUT ELC

Eastside Lutheran Colleges' ("the college") ICT environment was the cause of much frustration among staff and students, with logins frequently taking up to 30 minutes of teaching time.

OBJECTIVE

To better manage IT costs, while providing a sustainable, updated environment that delivers reliability and opportunities.

APPROACH

Perform a technology audit to identify and categorise risks based on urgency to develop a solution to achieve their objectives.

FUN FACT

Through **2024,** the majority of enterprises will continue to struggle with appropriately measuring **cloud security risks.**

Gartner (2019), Is the Cloud Secure?. [Online]
https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/is-the-cloud-secure/

COMMENTS

"We can now run classes properly, and the church can run services using our shared technology. This has transformed how we feel about IT in the college – Data#3 has brought us into the 21st Century."

Frances Williams, Operations Manager, Eastside Lutheran College.

BENEFITS

- Standardised, up-to-date hardware, software and cloud services.
- Automated backups and multiple redundancies in place.
- Secure local and online access for students and staff.
- Simplified on-going management of IT systems
- Resilient and reliable ICT infrastructure that can accommodate future growth.
- Reduced cost per year.
- A new ICT administrator backed by a prepaid Data#3 support agreement.
- Improved relationships for students, staff and church with ICT environment.

TECHNOLOGY

☑ HPE Servers and Storage

☑ Cisco Meraki cloud-managed security and wireless networking
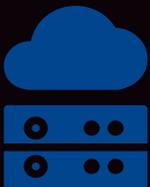
The Background

Eastside Lutheran Colleges' ("the college") ICT environment was the cause of much frustration among staff and students, with logins frequently taking up to 30 minutes of teaching time.

School management lacked visibility of the under-performing IT environment, and sought guidance on building an environment to support teaching and learning excellence.

The Challenge

When Frances Williams began her role as Operations Manager at the college, she quickly found that slow internet, login difficulties and poor communication were impacting staff, students, and relationships with the on-site church.

"Teachers couldn't approach the IT department about problems, and I wanted to make technology accessible, something that we could use to enhance the student experience," said Williams.

Initial investigations showed there was a lack of clarity in the ICT function.

"I asked trusted contacts for a referral, and I was told that if I want someone really good for the job, I should talk to Data#3," said Williams.

An audit of the entire ICT environment was performed in a process Williams described as 'so unobtrusive that nobody noticed' and 'it told us exactly what was going on.'

During the audit, it emerged that;

- Existing hardware was aging, non-standardised, and the use of out-of-support devices increasing risk.
- Servers occupied unsecured cabinets that presented a workplace health and safety risk.
- Security and backups were not functioning consistently.
- Software was not appropriately licensed, and educational discounts had not been leveraged.

"It was clear from the audit that we needed to do something quickly – our systems were letting us and our students down," said Williams.

"Our IT environment was not satisfactory on any level, with 27 major issues identified, but the Data#3 team gave us a clear plan to fix it."

IT Outcome

The decision was made to build an almost entirely new ICT environment. The Data#3 team put in place a hybrid environment with on-premises HPE servers and storage complemented by Cisco Meraki cloud-managed security and wireless networking.

"Our new technology means we can offer Wi-Fi to visitors and our teachers, as well as faster connection and mobility to access the system outside the college," said Williams.

Both short and long-term backups are now automated using Veeam technology. Multiple redundancies are in place, giving the environment the dependability that the college sought.

"I wanted to have confidence that backups would be done, that everything would work as it should," said Williams.

"I wanted IT that we really could trust."

Making decisions about a complex project could have been daunting for an operations manager whose background was not in IT but in finance.

"Even though the technology is complicated, the team at Data#3 used clear language, and explained everything in layman's terms," said Williams.

"This stopped IT from being a mystery, and allowed us to take control."

The Data#3 team used best-practice principles to deploy the fixed-price solution during school holidays, so timing was tight. Existing systems were migrated in parallel, with both environments operating side-by-side. After testing, users were moved to the new environment in time for the new term, and the old equipment was decommissioned in stages. A purpose-built server room was created, with Data#3 working closely with the college's electricians to ensure cabling was put in place on time.

A key priority for the college was security. With Cisco Meraki providing network security, and Trend Micro layered to provide email and internet security, users have easy, secure access.

"Technology enables our students and teachers to explore the world, but we have a duty to protect them online, and now we have achieved the right balance," said Williams.

Business Outcome

Since the deployment of the new solution, the colleges ICT environment has been transformed. After a complete rebuild, Eastside Lutheran college has an IT environment that is resilient enough to face the demands of a modern school.

In addition, the college hired a new ICT specialist, and Data#3's help with resourcing proved invaluable during the interview process.

"The Data#3 team knew what questions to ask about technical experience, and I was able to assess which candidate would fit our organisation and culture. We made a good team," said Williams.

As the college grows, the new ICT environment will scale with it. Costs are predictable, and over the solution's lifetime, the annual cost will be significantly less than maintaining the old infrastructure. Furthermore, much of the infrastructure is now leased, rather than owned, helping to make the overall solution affordable.

Data#3 secured educational discounts that reduce licence costs for the college by more than 50%. Ongoing budgeting has become more predictable, without fear of unsupported or unlicensed software putting the college's operations or reputation at risk. Some benefits, though, go beyond the financial:

"Students need to be familiar with the latest version of the software we use so that they can be workplace-ready," said Williams.

"With faster internet and the latest apps, we can give them a much better foundation for their learning."

Conclusion

Gaining a clear view of the IT situation gave the college the opportunity to bring its ICT environment in line with modern teaching practices. While that meant a radical overhaul, Williams described it as a 'positive experience' that equipped the college to deliver the best education to its students.

"We can now run classes properly, and the church can run services using our shared technology," said Williams.

Where once ICT was seen as a frustrating, secretive and time-consuming part of the organisation, it is now seen as an enabler that provides an important service to the college community.

"This has transformed how we feel about IT in the college – Data#3 has brought us into the 21st Century," finished Williams.

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