



The Client

Tudor Grange was formed from the combination in 1974 of the well-established boys' and girls' grammar schools on the same campus. A mixed comprehensive school with a pupil roll of over 1250, Tudor Grange has an excellent reputation for its academic achievement, pupil behaviour and caring atmosphere, and is always over-subscribed. It is listed in various national good school guides and in September 2002 was awarded Beacon School status.

In September 1995 Tudor Grange became a Technology College, and in September 2004 it became a Training School and gained approval for its Leading Edge Partnership plan. The school is also a mentor school for the DCSF/Specialist Schools and Academies Trust contributing to the Raising Achievement and Transforming Learning project. Tudor Grange is also a lead school for the national Beyond the Workforce Reform project. Since September 2006 the school has delivered, in collaboration with Solihull Sixth Form College, the International Baccalaureate Diploma to post 16 students.

The mission of Tudor Grange School is to prepare young people to play an active part in a technologically mature society by providing them with exceptionally high level skills, qualifications and attitudes that will benefit themselves and a wider community in an internationally competitive world.

The Journey

With approximately 1400 network users and in excess of 600 workstations, Tudor Grange School had traditionally evolved their IT systems internally, with IT Managers maintaining and implementing the school's network.

In addition, and similarly to the majority of schools in the area at the time, a lot of their services such as email and Internet were provided through their Local Education Authority, as opposed to having their own setup.

Over the years, the School had seen a number of IT Managers come and go. With the complications of staff turnover and the increasing scale of the school's IT systems, the school eventually decided to bring in some external support, and invited local IT consultancies to pitch for the work, as School Manager Paul Day explained;

"The succession of IT Managers moving on from the school, some for less than a year with us, meant that there was no long term strategy for the network or servers. Each came with their own ideas, and when they left we lost expertise and knowledge.

We needed some long term stability, and of the companies that pitched for the work, we chose Tek Response - not just because we had heard good things about them from others, but based on the strength and quality of their presentation. There was a strong clarity in what they had to say, they knew exactly what they were talking about, and we were also pleased with them price wise."

Switching over to this way of working afforded the school some real stability and consistency in terms of planning, as well as allowing them to be assured that they would be getting the maximum performance out of their expenditure.



The Challenge

Having worked very successfully with the school for over four years, Tek Response were happily entrusted to undertake a major technology refresh to guarantee that the school's network remained at the cutting edge in terms of educational resource, whilst also ensuring maximum efficiency and availability for users.

The existing setup was in fairly good shape, but was beginning to get old and had several areas for improvement in terms of efficiency and resource. As well as having a large server footprint, with eight large old servers filling a lot of space, there were a number of disparate elements of hardware and software that needed to be brought together, and the school's storage space was rapidly reaching capacity.

The Solution

Tek Response assessed the set up and formulated a plan to be rolled out in two stages - the first of which that would take place over the school's Easter holidays and the second of which that would see it completed over the summer holidays.

The Tek Response team, once on site, quickly began to upgrade and refresh the network. To begin with, they standardised the Network Operating System across the board, to instil consistency across all the school's servers.

They then set about consolidating the school's Uninterruptable Power Supply into a single supply, to replace the previous multiple smaller ones that were connected to each server, saving space and making things far easier to manage.

At the same time, Tek Response consolidated all of the school's various tower form-factor servers and moved over to a rack-based system which tidied things up immensely - from having a server room full of large servers which each required screens and keyboards to operate, the school was left with one rack containing all of the servers which were superior and only required one screen and one keyboard to access all of them, again vastly increasing the manageability of the servers.

Continuing down the hardware refresh line, Tek Response were aware that, as is not uncommon, the school's storage capacity, both in terms of hard disk space and tape backup, was beginning to approach capacity, with the time taken to undertake each back up increasing every day. In response, they installed additional file storage and new tape backup technology with considerably more storage space available, and far superior and more efficient technology, which had a significant impact on backup speeds.

The school's data had previously been distributed onto different servers, and Tek Response consolidated all of this into a single Network-Attached Storage Solution.

On the software front, Tek Response also undertook the considerable task of migrating the entire school over to SQL 2005 and Exchange 2007 for a truly appropriate and consistent working platform across the board.

The Results

Despite the huge scale of the project and the fact that it was rolled out in just two short stages, pupils were able to return to using the new, improved network from the first day back and with absolutely no significant problems at all, much to the relief of the School Manager;

