

ITWorx Introduces Microsoft Learning Gateway into U.K. Schools within County Durham



Country:

United Kingdom

Industry:

Education

Customer:

Durham County Council

Executive Summary

In a phased project under England's Building Schools Future (BSF) programme, Durham County Council sought to integrate e-learning into its schools. Starting with 25 schools and later in 100, ITWorx deployed MLG (Microsoft Learning Gateway) 2005 and provided consultancy, customization, development, deployment, and support services while using its education provisioning products. With a solution that completely adheres to the specific requirements of Durham County Council education strategies, County Durham was set to boost its education quality and efficiency.

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ITWorx professional education team was able to counsel us on the best course of action to implement a robust, user-friendly education solution. ITWorx team demonstrated their technology expertise and infrastructure resourcefulness deploying the solution throughout the 25 schools and another 100 schools in a later phase. Their prompt responses and on-time delivery highlighted ITWorx quality of project management and focus on customer satisfaction.

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**Phillip Smith,
Head of Information and
Technical Support Services,
Durham County Council.**

The Customer

Durham County Council provides a wide range of local authority services to almost 500,000 people. With a mission to make County Durham the best place in which to live, work, and bring up a family, Durham County Council is focusing on education and learning as the essentials for healthy community development. The county council benefits from the British Government's commitment to rebuild or renew every secondary school in England by 2020 under the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme initiated in February 2004.

The Challenge

In early 2006 Microsoft and Durham County Council looked at how e-learning solutions could play a pivotal role in the BSF programme. Durham County Council chose Microsoft Learning Gateway (MLG) 2005, a web-based education solution, to help creating a community that fosters a more positive attitude towards education.

MLG 2005 had to be customized to fit the special education system before being delivered to 25 secondary schools in County Durham. Durham County Council plans to deploy the solution into all of its schools as e-learning develops.

Technologies and Software

- Microsoft Learning Gateway (MLG) 2005
- Sharepoint Sever 2003
- Windows Server 2003 SP1
- ITWorx Education Catalyst suite

The Solution

ITWorx, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and education expert in Microsoft education solutions, was selected by Microsoft and Durham County Council to deploy MLG 2005 in the schools.

ITWorx delivered the Durham Learning Gateway (DLG); a collaborative e-learning solution engaging teachers, students and parents in an easy, secure, and advanced environment. The solution assists school administrators and helps manage the day-to-day activities and schedules in schools.

ITWorx delivered the DLG to Durham County Council. The DLG is a full MLG implementation that includes consultancy, customization/development, deployment, and support. The project began by creating a unique look and feel for the Durham schools based on the standard MLG 2005, which runs on the Microsoft SharePoint Portal 2003. It included building new SharePoint themes while maintaining common features as well as providing the flexibility for each school's site to have its own logo. The solution also necessitated integrating a variety of Web applications required by Durham County Council.

ITWorx technical consultants verified Durham County Council technical infrastructure to make sure their systems were fit to run the new solution. ITWorx team installed MLG 2005 in one school first before the deployment throughout 25 schools using its own branded education product suite, ITWorx Education Catalyst™, that includes the formerly branded tools: Auto-Deployment Tool (ADT) and Enterprise Provisioning Application (EPA). The solution was further deployed into 100 schools.

The use of the ITWorx Education Catalyst, with its MLG User Provisioning and School Provisioning modules, accelerated the mass deployment by about 90 per cent, and revolutionized the process of deploying user information into the DLG, creating mailboxes, and importing class schedules as well as granting authorizations and permissions for different users.

ITWorx delivered hands-on experience to the county's technical staff through consultation on the solution's best practices, delivering MLG workshops and training on the ITWorx Education Catalyst suite.

The Benefits

Stronger e-learning presence in the UK

By implementing the customized MLG, Durham County extends its outreach to teachers and parents as well as creates an exciting learning experience. After the initial 25 successful deployments, Durham County Council team further deployed MLG in 100 schools, expecting this number to grow in time. The DLG paves the way for tangible improvements in student performance in addition to a richer learning experience of students, parents, and teachers who will collaborate and communicate better by using the DLG portal.

Better place to live and learn

ITWorx customized and deployed the MLG in record time. Adoption of MLG 2005 sets Durham County Council on track for community development, furthering their mission to be the best place in which to live, work, and bring up a family. Better education is the basis for development, and e-learning is the ideal solution. Students enjoy the technological experience and are stimulated towards becoming skilled professionals.

Readily working portal

Durham County Council capabilities have been polished and brought up-to-speed to use the DLG portal. ITWorx knowledge has been transferred successfully to the technical staff through hands-on training, consultancy, and introduction of best practices for handling, maintaining, and scaling the DLG and the data centre for each school in Durham County. The ongoing support given by the ITWorx team has allowed the Durham County Council team to focus on other community development projects.

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