

## Case Study

# Avantis OpenCD finally puts an end to lost and damaged CD-ROMs at Hemel Hempstead School

### Background:

The Hemel Hempstead School in Hertfordshire is an LEA funded secondary school with a large sixth form and caters for 1,115 pupils. It has an excellent reputation for high standards; all their pupils are expected to work hard to achieve success in a range of subjects and are supported in their efforts by highly motivated, qualified and experienced teaching and support staff, in a well ordered and well equipped teaching environment.

The school's focus on general high standards mirrors its high standards in ICT. Hemel Hempstead School now boasts a PC network of over 150 workstations from RM plc and they have an impressive range of multimedia e-learning CD-ROMs purchased from many different publishers.

Avantis is the market leader in CD/DVD networking solutions for education. Installed in more than 5,000 schools and colleges nationwide, Avantis CD/DVD servers provide fast shared access to CD-ROMs and DVDs from any computer on the network. Avantis pioneered the use of hard disk technology to store and distribute multimedia CD and DVD information. Called Adaptive CD Imaging™, this approach provides rapid access to CD-ROM and DVD information by creating and storing images of CDs on fast hard disk drives.



### Keeping ahead of changing needs:

Rachel Barlow, Network Manager, has been a member of staff at Hemel Hempstead School for 10 years now, and can remember a very different ICT situation when she joined. "We originally had a small computer suite of BBC's ...but now we can boast ICT facilities that are truly 'state of the art'."

Over time Rachel has managed to transform the way ICT is taught at the school aided by government NGfL funding her fellow Systems Manager and enlightened ICT staff.

Having specific government targets to meet, coupled with satisfying teacher requests to allow shared access to the school's array of multimedia CD-ROMs had been something of a nightmare to manage.

For the last 5 years Hemel Hempstead School have used RM plc as their ICT supplier and run both RM Connect 2.4 and RM CC3 "We always had the time consuming problem of trying to make CDs network so pupils could share them - as well as managing everything else!... **Expenditure on CDs was a big investment and being able to store and manage them centrally on the Avantis CD Server provided the ideal solution to the problems of security and licensing.**"

The school is not alone in the issues it faces. For many schools, the time it takes to manage the process of lending out CD/DVD titles, and ensuring they are returned, is a big issue.



## Problem solved:

A nearby school was also partnering with RM for their curriculum network, and had already been using an Avantis OpenCD server for a year when Rachel began to look into CD-ROM networking. "I knew RM had a solution but the school down the road had said Avantis was working very well for them," explained Rachel. **"I was very impressed with its ease of management"**

"I talked to Avantis who I thought were very professional and presented me with the information I needed to go away and make a decision. The only concern I had was the compatibility with my RM network" said Rachel.

The neighbouring school eased Rachel's mind, as it worked well with their network. "We now even have shortcuts to CDs imaged on the Avantis server in the 'RM Topic Selector' Menu - a simple task"

At any given time, over 30 pupils in the school are using the CD server with no discernable issues with performance; in fact Rachel said, "The users must be pleased as we have had no complaints! **The use of the OpenCD server is transparent to the end user. So as far as the pupils and teachers are concerned, the CD works exactly as if it were in the CD-ROM drive of their computer.**"

Hemel Hempstead School currently uses OpenCD to network 45 different curriculum CD-ROM titles as well as CDs containing photos and images that staff and pupils have created for use across the school. The CDs are used widely throughout the school including the Science, Geography, IT, Modern Languages and Careers departments.

OpenCD provides 100% compatibility with all different CD and DVD formats, so even normally non-networkable CD titles can be networked.

Rachel's experience of the OpenCD server has been overwhelmingly positive; **"It's been fantastic, absolutely brilliant and really easy to use and administer from any PC on the network."** She continues, "When the network was first set up, there were only one or two computers that had CD-ROM drives, which made sharing multimedia software difficult. As time has progressed, multimedia software has become more important, and not all our machines had CD-ROM drives. Having the OpenCD acting as a remotely accessible device has made the whole thing much more convenient and easy. No more reliance on local CD ROM drives.

The benefits of using OpenCD were huge for the delivery of ICT at Hemel Hempstead School. Rachel concludes, **"It's a great solution. I would recommend it to any school having difficulty sharing CD-ROMs."**

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