

## Case Study

### Avantis CD server technology powers new multimedia software library

Market Sector: **Library**  
Customer: **TEEM**  
Solution: **Avantis CDserve+**

#### Background

There's an abundance of multimedia learning resources available on CD-ROM and DVD. The big problem facing schools is that teachers just don't have the time to sort through and evaluate all the titles available. This is where the organization TEEM, Teachers Evaluating Educational Multimedia, comes in!

TEEM has a network of 250 professional teachers who use educational software everyday. Each title submitted to TEEM is evaluated independently by at least two teachers. Their report and case study are posted on the TEEM website at [www.teem.org.uk](http://www.teem.org.uk) for others to use as a reference.

TEEM is currently in the final stages of launching a new service for teachers; a software library based at Homerton College, Cambridge University. The library is equipped with an Avantis CD server.



#### Problems

The software library that TEEM were attempting to set up was to contain hundreds of multimedia titles, worth thousands of pounds in total. Security was clearly going to be an issue here; things are easily lost, damaged or misplaced in libraries, including the CDs and DVDs themselves, plus the boxes, documents and guides that go with them. "Just cataloguing all this material would have been a difficult task, let alone finding space in the library", explained Michelle Thomson, Publisher Liaison Manager at TEEM. "We looked at several solutions to this problem and we concluded the best way forward would be to store all the CDs on a file server so that everyone could access them across the network"

However this method presents its own problems. Copy protection and the complex nature of multimedia CDs mean that many titles cannot be networked using a normal file server. Most titles need to be physically in a CD-ROM drive or they just won't run. To overcome this problem, TEEM turned to multimedia CD/DVD server manufacturer Avantis.

#### The Solution

It was the Computer Officer of Homerton College, David Cunningham, who first suggested the option of a CD server to TEEM. David was drafted in to provide technical support for TEEM and has been a big help in setting the system up. TEEM took David's advice and considered the options, finally settling on an Avantis CD/DVD server.

**"I talked to Avantis and they convinced me the product could do what we needed it to. I was very impressed by their professional approach," said Thomson.**

The advantage for TEEM in using a CD server was the ability to share multimedia across the network via a dedicated hard disk based system, thus protecting the valuable CDs from damage and leaving the library staff to just look after the handbooks, a much simpler task.

Avantis has developed special virtual drive software (Multimedia Virtual Drive'

Technology) to make sure CDs stored on their machines will run from a hard disk. The company actually guarantees 100 percent compatibility with all types of CD and DVD.

**“I’ve worked with CD jukeboxes before but this has proved to be a much more capable machine,”** said Cunningham.

**“We’ve had the unit for over 6 months now and it has proved to be extremely reliable. We manage it remotely using the built in software upload and delete CDs. We have to really, we keep it in the roof!”**

Cunningham said.

**“To make the best of the space we have several storage areas in the roof spaces, with the reliability of this product we don’t see a problem,”** he explained.

Another advantage of this solution is with licenses. Most software comes with a set number of user licenses and it can be difficult to regulate just how many people are using the system at once. There is a risk that staff might be using software illegally without even realising it! Using the Avantis software you can assign licenses and security privileges to each individual CD or DVD, making management very easy.

**“The system really is simple to use once you get started. The initial set up only took fifteen minutes too”,** said Cunningham.



## Success

The TEEM project has already proven to be a great success. Currently TEEM has around 200 software titles from over 70 different publishers stored in the library with more coming in all the time. The project has received a great deal of backing from the Department For Education and Skills, British Education Suppliers Association, Homerton College and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate who host the TEEM website.

**“We’ve had a great reception from everyone and some positive feedback from the trainee teachers at Homerton. They like the pressure free environment we give them, you can browse the software at your leisure and you don’t have a class full of children waiting for you!”** said Thomson.

**“The scheme also brings a lot of help to schools in the South East. They can show other teachers the latest ICT techniques and recommend new software based on their experience with us,”** explained Thomson

## Conclusion

Logistically this has been a difficult project to manage. However, Avantis’ robust CD server technology has proven indispensable, not just in assisting with the initial set-up of the TEEM software library, but also with the day-to-day management and administration of the software titles in the library.

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