

Case Study

Manford Primary School get ready for the Digital Curriculum with Avantis ContentCache™

Background:

Manford Primary School is in the Chigwell area of the London Borough of Redbridge. It lies on the Hainault estate, very close to the boundary with Essex. It is a large school with 439 pupils aged between four and 11 years. There is also a nursery class attended by 66 children on a part-time basis. Pupils are taught by a headteacher and 45 teaching staff.

Lynn Carleton, Deputy Head Teacher and ICT Co-ordinator, and Janet Wiseman, ICT Technician for Manford Primary have their work cut out with at least 40 users likely to be using the internet connection at any time, both pupils and teachers. This can be quite a significant drain on resources both in terms of support and bandwidth, even with a 2Mbps connection.

Manford Primary use a mixture of e-learning materials, including Espresso and Big Bus. With more and more resources being available on-line, and more emphasis being placed on electronic resources in lesson planning, the role of ICT is significant both in Manford Primary and schools nationwide. Hence Lynn was tasked with finding a more effective way of using the school's bandwidth and an easy way of enabling teachers to use the resources available.

Avantis caching and content delivery solutions are designed to accelerate and enhance access to web content and e-learning resources and enable the effective delivery, sharing and management of content within schools and local education authorities.

Optimised for high performance and high reliability, Avantis web caching appliances and content delivery management software have been developed specifically to cope with the rigorous demands of the education sector.

The Granada Learning ContentCache™ from Avantis, powered by Microsoft Internet Security and Acceleration (ISA) Server, is a smart web caching appliance available in Primary School and Secondary School models. It comes with an award winning array of content pre-loaded from Granada Learning and can be used with content from any content publisher. This means that the content doesn't rely on the speed of an internet connection and is always available.

E-learning frustrations:

With a large number of people accessing the internet at the same time it soon becomes evident that even with a decent broadband connection, sharing web access can be problematic. If you take a connection like Manford Primary's of 2 Mbps, shared with a classroom of 25 pupils and then calculate the download time for a 1 MB file such as a video clip, it still takes at least 1 minute and 45 seconds for it to download. This may seem a small amount of time, however this can be significant if you are in a class of impatient 4 - 11 years olds!

This is the problem that faced Lynn. With the ICT suite in constant use from its introduction, the school's broadband connection took a lot of pressure, especially with greater usage in classes, "breakfast clubs" and after school activities.

"Before we considered the Avantis solution, only 10 or so PCs could access the internet at any time," commented Lynn. The less than satisfactory



on-line experience of teachers and pupils meant that Lynn needed to find a solution for Manford Primary.

She got in touch with Joskos, the school's preferred IT supplier, who gave her an overview of the available options. There was also the recommendation of the LEAs Regional Broadband Consortium, LGfL, to consider. "We had heard of other schools' experiences in our area with other caching servers, and we decided to consider a wider range of options," said Janet. **"We needed to take into account a number of requirements with this project: Ease of set-up and use, enabling of lesson-planning, and of course improvement of the currently slow web access. Joskos helped a great deal by recommending the ContentCache server, and then arranging for a free trial to see how it could work for us."**



As a supplier, Joskos helped set up the ContentCache with no trouble at all. **"The service we received was excellent,"** commented Lynn. Straight away teachers were able to use the easy-to-use interface to create content jobs for their lessons. **"Being able to schedule the download of material in advance of lessons has been very useful for us, and pupils have found it easy to use. We were able to feel the benefit of the bandwidth savings almost immediately. All the children in a class were able to use the same sites at the same time!"** A stark contrast compared to the school's previous situation.

Conclusion:

"We could easily forget how bad it (internet access) was," said Janet, **"The ContentCache has improved internet access tremendously, as well as network performance. Plus we can now access video-rich content that would have been impossible in the past."**

Lynn believes the school has experienced many benefits as a result of the Avantis ContentCache server, among them:

- ◆ Faster web access for students and pupils
- ◆ Being able to use online resources for the whole class
- ◆ Aiding lesson planning for teachers
- ◆ Simple set up and integration
- ◆ Works with many e-learning content packages

Manford Primary School now has an ICT suite that is fully functional and able to handle the current requirements of its pupils and teachers, as well as the future requirements of the digital curriculum.

Lynn concluded **"We couldn't do without it now."**

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