The Hertfordshire & Essex High School

Motivating students and liberating staff with e7 and iPad

In 2012, The Hertfordshire & Essex High School decided to roll out a 1:1 iPad scheme, starting with their 200 sixth form students. However, they were unsure whether to also offer the devices to staff, as teachers were already provided with a school-managed laptop. They worked with our e7 team to set up a term-long trial in which 40 key staff members were given an iPad.

"There's obviously been a huge shift in focus away from desktop PCs towards mobile devices," explained the school's Strategic Leader of ICT, Ross Woodall, when asked about the decision to roll out iPad. "We wanted to have a device that was friendly and intuitive for the students to use, and we didn't want to deploy a Windows-based device and make it part of our domain, because a lot of our services are delivered via web interfaces. We thought that iPad was well made and well supported, and it really engaged and enthused the students. We trialled it with a few students and they were particularly keen on iPad over any other device."

Trialling iPad with staff

The school rolled out iPad to their sixth form first, partly due to the increasing popularity of the sixth form but also because "we really wanted to provide a device that they could embed in their lessons [from the start of the academic year]." However, after the initial rollout, it was clear that a few of the staff were a bit uncomfortable because some of them were less familiar with Apple products. "We decided to do the e7 trial so that the staff could get some hands-on experience with the iPad and see if it was beneficial as a teaching resource."

Although our e7 deployments are usually split between staff and students, we were impressed by what the school had planned, and worked with them to identify 40 key staff members who would receive an iPad for a term. The school already provided staff with laptop computers, and one of the main aims of the trial was to assess whether providing an iPad as well would be an effective use of the school's ICT budget.

For more information about the e7 Project and how to implement an iPad rollout in your school, get in touch with us on the details below.

In a nutshell...

Who are The Hertfordshire & Essex High School?

The Hertforshire & Essex High School is an award-winning secondary school and sixth form in Hertfordhire. They are a Leadship Partner School with a focus on ICT and sciences.

What did they need?

The school were rolling out a 1:1 iPad scheme in their sixth form but were unsure whether they should also offer iPad to staff. They needed a fast, simple way to trial the devices with staff and assess their effectiveness.

How did Jigsaw24 help?

We provided 40 iPad devices for staff to use over the autumn term, and set up a launch event to bring everyone up to speed with the scheme. We also advised the school's IT team on their device management and infrastructure options.

What were the benefits?

The school has realised that iPad allows great flexibility and mobility for both students and teachers, and has seen a huge amount of interest in iPad from practical subjects like the arts and sport science, where the iPad camera allows students to record their training sessions and receive instant feedback from teachers and peers.

"I think the e7 Project was very helpful in reassuring us that iPad for staff was a worthwhile expenditure," Ross said. "Trialling the device enabled us to see the benefit it brought, while actually supporting the staff. This meant that they could make better use of the hardware with the students, as well as using it themselves. It meant that their teaching became much more mobile. They were able to teach out in the field or the playground if they needed to, and could do audio and video recordings in lessons with no planning needed in advance. Things like that were much, much less viable with a traditional laptop."

Assessing Mobile Device Management (MDM) options

When the school joined the e7 Project, our team met with them to discuss how they planned to manage their iPad deployment. While many schools are locking down their ICT equipment and filtering the type of apps that their students can download, the Hertfordshire & Essex team decided that when it came to getting older students to buy into the scheme and use their devices as much as possible, freedom was key.

"We felt that in order for the students to really embrace the iPad and make sure it was something that they used constructively, it was more helpful to have the students register them to their own iTunes accounts as opposed to a centralised one that was managed by the school," explained Ross.

"We already have a system where students can borrow laptops, and we found that this was underused because there wasn't the flexibility [to allow students to put] their software on the laptop they were using, whereas with the iPad, freedom has allowed them to become a much more valuable resource rather than just being another item to carry round. We have very responsible students, so I'm sure we have the odd game installed on the devices, but we see them being used a lot for taking notes and recording lessons (to video or audio). I think that's really valuable for them, the ability to access the teaching outside of the lesson."

Increasing usage while maintaining network security

The school's tactic of keeping the iPad deployment relatively open seems to be paying off: they rolled out a new WiFi network to support the deployment, and of the 170 devices they handed out, Ross has seen "a hundred and twenty Apple devices connected all day, every day. We'll have between 170 and 180 devices on the wireless network daily and seventy five per cent of them will be Apple devices."
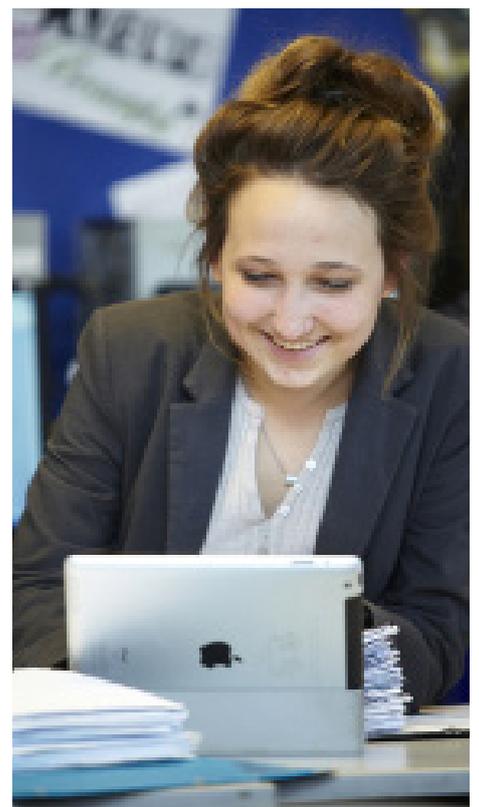
And how does the school cope with having so many unmanaged devices on their network? "We deliver a lot of our services through web interfaces: our VLE, our email and remote desktop access - all of that is accesible through a web browser. All devices on the wireless network authenticate against our Windows domain and all traffic is transmitted securely."

Encouraging more mobile teaching and learning

When it comes to working with the iPad, the school is happy for students to take the lead, encouraging them to use the devices for general note-taking, research and organisation rather than structuring lessons round specific apps. "We have many teachers who have really embraced the iPad in their teaching," Ross noted, "particularly the arts and the technology faculties. PE and music are using them a tremendous amount and designing lessons around them - I think a lot of that is to do with the touch interface and the flexibility and portability that you get with the device, which really feeds into those faculties.

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"PE and sports sciences are now able to film people moving [using the iPad] and play that back so they can analyse it frame by frame. I think that sort of thing is much easier for the teacher compared with borrowing one of the school's cameras and having to take it back to the classroom to analyse the video. [With iPad they are] able to record and play it back and have instant feedback. It's also very nice that students can project via an Apple TV in the classroom to show what they're working on at their desk. You get collaborative use of a projector, with everybody in a class connecting to show what they're working on and share their ideas, and that's really quite valuable."

The school's next initiative is to deploy Apple TVs throughout the school and use them to allow students to share their work with the rest of the class. "We held off on rolling them out originally because the firmware didn't quite offer the level of security we wanted," Ross explained. "We were worried that a student would be able to share content via an Apple TV from anywhere in the school unless there was some way of locking them down. But one of the updates has enabled us to have a PIN-based access to the Apple TVs [that prevents people without the right password from sharing content]."

Once there are Apple TVs throughout the school, Ross and his team plan to look at ways to allow multiple teachers to FaceTime with a class during lessons in order to explain key points. "For example, if we have a teacher who's teaching some tiny aspect of computing in a design technology or graphics lesson, they'll actually be able to FaceTime with one of the IT teachers over the projector to explain that specific point, so you can pull that expertise directly into the lesson."

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Ross Woodall
Strategic Leader of ICT,
The Hertfordshire & Essex High School

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Want to know more about the e7 Project?   Call: **03332 409 310**   Email: **e7@Jigsaw24.com**   Visit: **www.Jigsaw24.com/e7**