

SYDNEY, Aust. November 11, 2009 D-Link Australia &

New Zealand, the end-to-end networking solutions provider for business and consumers, today announced that it has implemented a Gigabit network solution at leading independent girls school, MLC School Sydney.

MLC School Sydney is a Pre-Kindergarten to Year 12 Uniting Church independent school for girls, located close to the centre of Sydney.

Established in 1886, MLC offers broad ranging opportunity and diversity with an enviable record of providing an outstanding learning environment while working to meet girls individual needs.

The school has implemented an innovative education program, Transforming Learning, with a focus on flexible learning and innovation. This marked a shift in educational emphasis from classroom-based teaching to online learning systems. Teachers are now able to upload documents, assignment material and more for students to access from anywhere at any time. Students are now able to continue their work when they are absent from school either on exchange, field trip or extended holiday.

MLC has supported laptops within the school since 1997, when it commenced the move to a full one-to-one computer environment, for years 5 to 12, and has one of the largest deployments of Apple Macintoshes in an educational environment in Australia.

With one laptop for each student in these year groups, there can be up to 1000 student PCs and 250 staff computers simultaneously connected to the schools campus-wide wireless network.

You can walk around the main campus area where there are caf-style tables and umbrellas set up and you will find a teacher with four or five students, all using laptops, said Peter Milburn, Network Manager for MLC School Sydney.

Demand for connectivity is constant, with little tolerance for disruptions due to networking issues. Teachers and students get stressed if they lose uptime for a few minutes, said Milburn. Because they are used to having IT services available all the time, even a small outage is unacceptable.

The Challenge

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Recently, the expanding use of digital media technologies like streaming video within MLC School has increased demand for network capacity.

Intensive use of the schools intranet has also driven increased transfers of data between students and teachers.

A teacher can upload work for the students on the intranet and regardless of whether they are at school, at home or overseas they can access that work, complete it and submit the result, said Nigel Quinn, Managing Director for Infinite Loop, the systems integration company supporting MLC School. Students can download or view videos posted on the schools intranet as part of that process, creating a virtual

classroom environment.

As a result, MLCs network reached its maximum capacity and needed to be upgraded. It was experiencing performance bottlenecks, for example, when streaming video to individual laptops in classrooms.

The School decided to get its existing network switches upgraded to support Gigabit Ethernet. This significantly boosted their network capacity.

We were assured from our existing networking vendor that the core chassis was upgradeable to Gigabit Ethernet and Power over Ethernet capabilities later on down the track, said Quinn. When it came time to get quotes, all of a sudden it was not upgradeable and we had to purchase a whole new chassis which would have been a large deployment. It was not great news.

Infinite Loop recommended to MLC School that it widen its range of potential suppliers to include D-Link. I advised MLC that D-Link is not only going to give a more cost-effective option, they will also provide a more flexible solution, said Quinn.

MLC has a unique learning environment which meant there were unique challenges to proposing a robust but flexible design. D-Links engineering team was able to work closely with Infinite Loop to design a multi-purpose solution that would not only meet the expectations of the college, but also to build in advanced technologies for its flexible learning environment.

The previous solution was fixed in the way it distributed data across the network, which was really causing bottleneck issues, said Quinn. I had already been using D-Links xStack switches elsewhere and I could see the value that the flexibility of its solution could bring to MLC. So MLC and I designed a network solution that has not been done before at the school.

D-Links Solution

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We could have gone with the existing supplier again and get less for the money, but the way we have done it gives us extra functionality and Gigabit Ethernet ports, said MLCs Milburn. I think it was the need for flexibility in the design of the solution that clinched the decision for us to move to D-Link.

When Nigel and I first discussed the challenges, I was keen to propose a stacking solution to provide MLC with flexibility that would benefit them in the long term, said Jamie Carter, Commercial Business Manager for D-Link Australia. By implementing a future proof design MLC could avoid an expensive forklift replacement of its network infrastructure in the future.

The reasonable price and advanced features, combined with the flexibility to handle high volumes and built-in redundancy for future needs, convinced MLC that D-Link was the right option for a new campus network.

MLC deployed a combination of D-Link Layer 3 and Layer 2 Managed Gigabit Switches, providing Gigabit Ethernet speed, Power over Ethernet for VoIP and wireless connectivity. The new solution also introduced centralised management control across the schools dispersed physical geography.

The switches included the D-Link DGS-3650 and DGS-3627 xStack L3 Gigabit Stack Multi-Layer Routing Switches with IPv6 support, providing 48 and 24

Gigabit Ethernet ports respectively. For remote locations, MLC deployed the DGS-3426P 24-port Gigabit L2+ Stackable Managed Switch supporting Power over Ethernet connections.

D-Link and Infinite Loop were able to utilise the schools existing investment in Apple base stations, connecting them to the D-Link Power over Ethernet switches at the edge of the network to provide wireless access around the campus.

Customer Benefits

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MLC gained increased performance and flexibility, ease of use and improved levels of support.

We now have a scalable Gigabit network which is future proofed, said Milburn. We do not get bogged down by the risk of running out of capacity by operating at 75% hot. The school has also benefited from Power over Ethernet technology at the edge of the network which simplifies the deployment and maintenance of connected devices.

In addition to the extra network speed and capacity provided, the new D-Link networks increased flexibility allows it to more easily adapt to ever changing demands.

MLC is unlike any other education environment that I have been involved with as a systems integrator, said Infinite Loops Quinn. The continual change is something that MLC does incredibly well and, with D-Link, the school now has a network solution that is also continually adaptable.

MLC has also experienced a reduction of the time taken to re-image a computer. Where it had previously taken an average of 40 to 50 minutes, it has now been reduced to an average of 5-10 minutes per computer, said D-Links Carter. This is due not just to the speed of the network but also the design.

We benefit from having a much smarter and more flexible network with trouble-free network management where we can push bandwidth to areas where we require it and take it away from other areas where we dont need it, said MLCs Milburn.

About D-Link

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D-Link is the global leader in connectivity for small, medium and large enterprise business networking. The company continues to strive for excellence as an award winning designer, developer, and manufacturer of networking, broadband, digital electronics, voice and data communications solutions for the digital home, Small Office/Home Office (SOHO), Small to Medium Business (SMB), and Workgroup to Enterprise environments. With millions of networking and connectivity products manufactured and shipped, D-Link is a dominant market participant and price/performance leader in the networking and communications market. D-Link Australia and New Zealand headquarters are located at Building A, Level 3, 11 Talavera Road, North Ryde, NSW, 2113, Sydney Australia. Phone (02) 8899 1800; FAX (02) 8899 1868; Internet

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