



Case Study:



Supported by ITS Feda and Novell Cluster Services for NetWare 6.5
The Isle of Wight College chooses 1st class stability and reliability for their IT Services

Background

The Isle of Wight is a county in its own right and is also the most populated Parliamentary constituency in the United Kingdom with over 130,000 residents.

The Isle of Wight College is the only College on the island, serving 8000 students and 500 staff. It provides courses and services to school leavers and adults across a broad range of curriculum subjects. With a single campus plus four outreach education centres serving remote parts of the community, the College has achieved notable academic success with its recognition as one of the top 10% of colleges in the UK and student success rates well ahead of the national benchmarks.

The IT infrastructure support team is responsible for over 8,000 user accounts and 800 work stations. Remote access is also provided. To support their needs it was determined that they needed a six server solution on a single campus.

The challenge

With so many students and staff, the College's applications and services need to provide high performance and outstanding reliability. Although rare, inevitable server or critical application failures had led the senior management team, guided by the IT management staff, to seek a solution aimed at reducing the substantial business risk associated with any system failure.

The requirements

The management team had identified a number of key requirements in short listing a potential solution. Acknowledging that the physical failure of a server is always possible, or indeed some maintenance work might be required, in the event of server downtime, all users, applications and data would need to be available automatically and seamlessly from an alternative server. This would allow the client to carry out maintenance during working hours, not at midnight or at weekend with the associated overtime rates.

Technically, the client demanded more: the user access and security controls should remain active regardless of which server in the cluster controls access to the data,

The solution

As an experienced IT management team, the client had already recognised the benefits of a potential cluster solution to minimise future business risks, in addition, existing experience of running a stable and resilient Novell NetWare solution gave confidence in the product's ability to perform.

ITS Feda Limited's long standing Novell expertise, coupled to a proven record of providing highly cost effective and efficient services to The Isle of Wight College was the opportunity for a partnership agreement to deliver the chosen solution of Novell Cluster Services for NetWare 6.5

In addition to meeting the Client's basic needs, this solution was able to offer Automatic IP address assignment and file transfer applications which will continue to work regardless of which servers are active; shared storage pools making data available to more clients more consistently and simplified administration.

For the College, a real benefit in terms of security, user availability and cost management.

The deployment

In planning the deployment, Novell's own words were taken into consideration. "Your customers don't care what you're running — as long as it works flawlessly, 24/7/365." There would be no, "Quick Hacks" in implementation. IT was therefore important that the planning was timely and considered.

In a technology partnership approach, The Isle of Wight College worked with ITS Feda Limited in planning the work over several weeks. Not only would this involve deployment, it was also essential that College team received high level, customised training at the Client's premises. As this would be carried out on the live system, not only would the trainer need to be a highly experienced Certified Novell Instructor, but also a highly competent Certified Novell Engineer.

The results

Service continuity is as important in education as in industry and commerce. The reduction in business risks, with associated peace of mind enjoyed by the entire management team achieved by having a consistent and reliable IT infrastructure has increased the performance of the Isle of Wight College. In addition to the enhanced reputation of their IT services, the IT staff have gained considerable flexibility and improved control over planning and deadlines. Network Manager, Rosie Quelch stated, "The greatest thing that Novell's Clustering Services have brought us is time"; and as she says, "Time is money".

Rosie has declared herself very happy both with ITS Feda's services and her allocated consultant and trainer for the project Kerry Ross. Kerry is one of ITS Feda's senior Novell Engineers and they have formed an excellent ongoing working relationship. Rosie stated "Kerry is a diamond. She won't let go of a problem until she has found a solution and made sure every detail of it works. We are very happy working with her." Kerry continues to support Isle of Wight College via their helpdesk support contract whenever they need it and ITS Feda is delighted to assist the college whenever required.

Conclusion

The new cluster solution has been very well received and The Isle of Wight College are looking forward to a trouble free term in their new high availability environment. Aside from securing the provision of critical systems, the team are delighted with the flexibility now available to implement patching and server upgrades any time they like without service interruption.

ITS Feda Ltd

ITS Feda is a leading supplier of network services, tools and consultancy. Part of Thames Valley University, ITS Feda have partnerships with Novell, Microsoft and other major industry vendors.

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