

Schools' IMS Team in Cornwall County Council gives IT top marks

Rolling out Richmond SupportDesk to support local schools

Background

The Schools' IMS Team in Cornwall County Council, based in Truro, addresses the IMS needs of the schools in the community. The quality of learning services in the county is given particular priority, with the council setting out the clear goal: *'to be recognised as one of the leading providers of high quality education in England and Wales'*. This can only be achieved with adequate support provision as the quantity of ICT in Schools evolves.

The IMS team provides a central ICT support function to handle approximately 1,000 calls about ICT issues every month, run by six full-time employees fulfilling the IMS requirements of 280 schools in the county. Three roving technicians attend schools on pre-scheduled rotational visits making mobile technology to support these visits essential.

The Problem

With an average of 50 service desk calls a day, the IMS Team needed a replacement for its previous in-house ICT helpdesk software to handle the sheer growth in the number of calls stemming from a rise in the number of computers in the classroom. For example, one secondary school in the county has over 800 computers.

Support technicians needed a way of tracking recurring issues; they wanted to log incidents so they could be used as reference material for resolving future incidents of a similar nature. They needed to reduce the amount of time spent researching incidents to help increase the speed at which they could respond to the ever increasing scope of IMS infrastructure and growth in ICT support requests.



With the majority of schools in the county spread over a large rural area, the service desk also needed to be able to provide mobile support to the roaming technicians to cope with demands while out in the field.

The Solution

The primary requirement was an automated service desk system that would be flexible enough to grow and adapt as their needs change, ensuring maximum return on investment and could be deployed rapidly. Richmond SupportDesk was up and running in just three days including training.

"We looked at three suppliers when deciding on a replacement for our IMS service desk. Richmond Systems stood out because its products easily adapted to our internal processes, were intuitive to use, and could be expanded and developed as our needs changed over time," said Jonathan Jenkin; Schools' IMS support manager at Cornwall County Council.

"The Richmond SupportDesk solution was also unique in its ability to provide the support our roaming technicians needed while travelling around the county, and had the ability to track progress online," Jonathan continued.

The Results

Since its adoption, Richmond SupportDesk has improved how the IMS team deals with support desk enquiries and has allowed 80 per cent of calls to be closed at the first point of contact or within 24 hours.

As well as ensuring a more efficient service, technical support staff have saved significant amounts of time because Richmond SupportDesk enables mobile working on a device running Microsoft Windows Mobile™.



This has allowed the roaming technicians to deal more efficiently with the 80 support issues faced on average per week.

Now, they can manage incidents while on-site in schools with the ability to immediately update the status of incidents to maintain an accurate record of activity for service level targets (SLAs)

The IMS team has seen an increase in productivity as a result of developing a bank of standard responses to common problems, rather than researching each new individual call. Most of these tend to occur during upgrades or software deployment, and the National Census also generally creates a raft of ICT issues.

“The knowledge base makes the IMS support team’s job much easier as they are able to gain better visibility of issues, allowing them to both anticipate and prioritise problems and respond more effectively to common issues,” said Jonathan.

“With less time spent ‘firefighting’, technicians can concentrate on developing the infrastructure or rolling out more useful technology and applications. Using Richmond SupportDesk ensures they are using their time more effectively and have greater job satisfaction as they are not consistently facing the same problems.”

The Future

Following the initial deployment, the School’s IMS Team in Cornwall County Council has expanded its user base into different divisions, increasing their users from six to 25 support technicians. The team intends to expand Richmond SupportDesk further to give schools the ability to log their own calls directly and have access to the knowledge base for basic support requests and FAQ’s, thereby reducing pressure on IT support freeing up time for more complex issues.

“With Richmond SupportDesk we are armed with the right help desk to provide IMS support for over 280 schools and our engineers now have the tools to respond effectively and the knowledge to prevent IMS issues occurring in the first place. IMS support is critical in ensuring the schools in Cornwall are second-to-none, and Richmond SupportDesk is now an integral part of that.” Jonathan continued