

Case study

South Staffordshire College transforms digital learning



HP Chromebooks equip educators with the tools they need to engage students and boost academic achievement

Industry

Education

Objective

South Staffordshire College wanted to equip itself with a lightweight, durable notebook that could access all the tools they need to teach effectively

Approach

Following a comprehensive evaluation exercise working with educational IT specialist Vitalize, the College decided to deploy 150 HP Chromebooks based on their functionality, battery life and performance

IT matters

- HP Chromebooks boot up within seconds, saving valuable teaching time
- The devices are enormously reliable with only one reported issue in an entire year

Business matters

- Energy use is 60 per cent lower than traditional laptops. In a desktop environment of over 2,000 machines the energy savings alone are over £35k
- Teachers can now mark registers instantly in real-time, rather than spend hours completing register forms at the end of the day
- Google™ Hangouts represent 60 per cent of meetings translating to huge savings in time and money from not having to travel between campuses



“How do you reinvent education in the digital age? The way in which young people interact is radically different to even five years ago so innovation is no longer optional, it’s essential. For our college we wanted to standardise on one device that would be portable, cloud-ready and easy to use. We also wanted to reduce our energy expenses and carbon footprint.”

– Jamie Smith, director of strategy and infrastructure, SSC

South Staffordshire College



UK college transforms the classroom with agile, flexible HP Chromebooks

Following a huge research and evaluation exercise, 150 teachers at South Staffordshire College are using HP Chromebooks to improve productivity and access critical information regardless of location. The devices’ durability, build quality, battery life and reliability have proven an instant success with staff.



Challenge

Rethinking digital education

With four campuses, South Staffordshire College (SSC) offers a wide range of courses to suit every learning style, from practical skills such as painting and decorating to advanced engineering, motorsport, agricultural technology, website and games design, music technology, and a wide range of apprenticeship opportunities.

Every year, over 3,000 new students choose to study at SSC joining a total of nearly 10,000 learners because of this broad curriculum not to mention its 180-hectare Rodbaston estate which encompasses a zoo, art gallery, equestrian centre, beauty salons and restaurants.

SSC is committed to leading the field when it comes to integrating technology into the learning environment but the infrastructure it had in place was no longer fit for purpose. It wanted to refresh its hardware in order to stay ahead of the curve.

“The question we asked ourselves was: how do you reinvent education in the digital age? The way in which young people interact is radically different to even five years ago so innovation is no longer optional it’s essential,” explains Jamie Smith, director of strategy and infrastructure, SSC. “For our college, we wanted to standardise on one device that would be portable, cloud-ready and easy to use. We also wanted to reduce our energy expenses and carbon footprint.”

SSC carried out an exhaustive research exercise and decided that the HP Chromebook met its criteria most closely. It tested devices from a number of vendors and analysed the feedback from teachers.

“When it came to the HP Chromebook, we had 100 per cent of respondents saying positive remarks which is unprecedented,” adds Smith. “That convinced us that it was the right machine for us.”



Solution

Elegant, lightweight and durable

The HP Chromebook runs lightning-fast Chrome OS, meaning the best of Google is at hand in a sleek and stylish notebook form-factor. This enables users to access the full suite of Google applications instantly from anywhere - in this case Google Apps for Education (GAFE).

“Most of our systems are cloud-based and easily accessible from the HP Chromebook – all you need is an internet connection and we have installed WiFi across the campus so that is not an issue,” continues Smith. “That means our teachers can use productivity tools, School Information Management software and more specialised applications anywhere.”

Most importantly, the HP device enables teachers to record attendance in real-time. They also last all day on a single charge, making them ideal for the college environment where teachers move from classroom to classroom.

“Every single college in the world has problems with getting registers marked accurately so putting a device in the hands of the teacher solves that in a single stroke,” says Smith. “Teachers can log attendance in real-time at the start of class.”

Benefits

Enhanced productivity at lower costs

Aside from enabling accurate record-keeping and saving teachers hours of time at the end of the day filling out register forms, the new devices also boast a range of other benefits. Perhaps the most impressive is the fact that the HP Chromebooks use 60 per cent less energy which translates to £35k in energy savings per year on a desktop estate of 2,000 machines.

The teachers also love the simplicity of the device: it’s lightweight, durable and a joy to use. It boots up within six seconds as guaranteed by Google and HP, saving valuable time when classes begin.

Customer at a glance

Applications

Google Applications

School Information Management System

Hardware

• HP Chromebook

Software

• Google Chrome

“From the moment you open the box, you know the HP Chromebook looks attractive, ergonomic and has a superior build quality,” remarks Smith. “Moreover, they are incredibly reliable – in the year since deployment, I have had only one issue which was quickly resolved by Vitalize.”

“In a financially challenging environment it’s essential that any investment in technology provides the best return that it can. Deploying HP Chromebooks that use less energy, boot up in seconds and connect to the WiFi seamlessly has enabled us to save both time and money.”

– Jamie Smith, director of strategy and infrastructure, SSC

The use of HP Chromebooks has increased user productivity by providing a window to Google Drive; in just six months teachers have uploaded over one million documents and not lost a single one. The device is also encouraging the use of Google Hangouts instead of face-to-face meetings.

“Hangouts represent 60 per cent of our meetings now – that means huge savings in time and money from not having to travel between campuses. We are working smarter and more flexibly and we want to involve our students in that experience,” concludes Smith.

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4AA6-6387EEE, July 2016

