Case Study

Ubuntu proves invaluable for specialist sports school

Stability, reduced maintenance and significant cost-savings - Ubuntu proved an outstanding choice for Skegness Grammar School.

Background

Skegness Grammar School is a small selective school on the Lincolnshire coast. It acts as a specialist college for sport for nearly 800 pupils, and has a boarding provision for around 60. Alistair Crust is responsible for serving the technology needs of the Skegness Grammar School community.

Issue

In 2001, the schools aging Novell and Windows 98 curriculum network was creaking and in need of an upgrade. Alistair was faced with the dilemma of providing a secure, robust and cost-effective computing environment across the school whilst ensuring minimal disruption was caused by the implementation of a new operating system. Alistair said, " We needed something that would work well, be more robust than the proprietary software we were used to and not cost the earth."

"The cost to upgrade to Windows 2000 and the necessary Office software ran into £10,000's - money the school just did not have." said Alistair. The school already had a small Linux network in its boarding house which proved popular and very stable. So the ideal solution was a desktop environment that was able to run their enterprise system, had outstanding stability and reduced maintenance requirements. That's where Ubuntu came in.

Solution

Alistair produced a costing for a school Linux solution which totaled about 30 percent of the network equivalent of proprietary solutions, including a completely new network infrastructure running Linux. Alistair chose to implement Ubuntu. Alistair said "I had heard of this new up-and-coming distro called Ubuntu and tried it out at home first. I immediately loved it. Ubuntu is straight to the point. There are no features that shouldn't be there or are implemented just because they can be.

Result

Ubuntu is running on 150 PCs, 110 of which are thin clients running a wide variety of applications that prove invaluable their school setting; OpenOffice 2, photo editing software, mind mapping software, database creation and management tools, content management tools, graphics creation and drawing software.

Alistair says, "The results have been fantastic. Ubuntu is very, very stable and the servers cope well with the lunch time 'hit'. IT Lab usage has gone up during lunch and break times since we have been using Ubuntu. Plus, it has enabled me to increase the manageability of the network environment and reduce complexity and maintenance time significantly."

Requirements

:: Low entry cost

:: Easy installation

:: Ease-of-use

:: Robust system

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Alistair Crust, Systems Administrator