

A DYNAMIC LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

orton wistow primary school >>>



Orton Wistow is a co-educational Foundation Primary School in Peterborough with over 300 pupils between the ages of four and ten. Independent reports by OFSTED have listed Orton Wistow as “a school with many strengths” and many of the educational establishments within the region visit the school to witness how it is run and equipped. Well ahead of the British Government’s Schools’ ICT targets, Orton Wistow has a higher ratio of computers to pupils than the majority of secondary schools in the UK.

The school currently has 20 laptops; 17 of which are in regular circulation, while the other three are assigned to the core members of staff. These are kept on the school premises for use on a day-to-day basis and are also available for staff to use overnight. There are approximately 16 pupils to every laptop, which essentially means that the classes have a ‘one computer between two’ share. There are also at least two PCs permanently stationed in each classroom and in some places as many as four.

The flexible working and studying environment that these laptops provided was a key investment the school was keen to leverage. It was agreed that a wireless network was essential as it would take advantage of the existing technology and extend the benefits further.

The deployment of a wireless network would provide a solid foundation to support the school’s roaming ICT infrastructure and increase the flexibility of the school environment by crucially adding mobility and the ability to access ICT and applications from anywhere in the school.

Richard Laxton, ICT Technician at Orton Wistow, investigated several vendor alternatives before deciding on the core wireless networking equipment.

“We consulted with a third party whose advice was that D-Link was the best choice for the core of our wireless network. We chose the AirPlus DWL-900AP+ Access Point with DWL-650+ PCMCIA Cards for the laptops, specifically for the AirPlus range’s 802.11b+ chipset. This allows us to operate our wireless network at up to and including 22Mbps, which increases the speed and the range of our wireless network.

“At the time of choosing our wireless network we looked at several competing products, but most were all half the speed of D-Link’s, coming in at only 11Mbps. On top of this, D-Link’s DWL-900AP+ Access Point is a very manageable piece of equipment, offering both a web administration module built into the device and a remote management tool that can be run from the desktop. It also offers a wide range of configurable options to suit almost any necessary usage for an access point.”



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AirPlus DWL-650+ PCMCIA Card



AirPlus DWL-900AP+ Access Point



Head Teacher Euan McGilp explained, "The deployment of the D-Link Wireless AirPlus products throughout the school has enabled our pupils to fully utilise ICT applications within both the computer labs and the classroom. We recently had our Year 6 class deploy an assembly presentation using PowerPoint. We had an access point in a nearby position and connected a laptop to a data projector. The whole school watched this in our weekly assembly and it went very well."

Richard Laxton added, "We now have a dedicated 45-minute ICT session with each class once a week. This time is generally used to further the children's individual keyboard and trackpad skills, and to introduce them to the various Microsoft XP Pro and Office XP programs that the school uses as standard. Last term we mainly focused on Microsoft Word and everyone in the school has at least learnt to start the program and type his or her name. The older children learned how to use WordArt, ClipArt, and how to copy and paste, among other things."

"Everyone has also used the Internet wirelessly through broadband Internet access distributed via our wireless access points. For the younger children this has meant they can use a fun educational website, such as 'Bobthebuilder.com', whereas the older children have learnt about The Beatles, Water Use Around The World, and Henry VIII among other things. It's quite an amazing sight really and we're very pleased with the progress all have made across the school. The D-Link wireless network and mobile data suite has enabled the school to deliver a far more dynamic learning environment, enabling our pupils, including children as young as four, to access and use industry-standard software and to become more proficient and computer literate."

Richard Laxton concluded, "Our wireless network is used to produce a 'mobile data suite'. We currently do not have our access points fixed; instead they follow the laptops to the room they are to be used in, and are deployed to Cat5/power points in each room. Looking ahead, we do have plans to expand the number of access points around the school and position them statically, to allow a true wireless network that covers the entire school as well as to employ a D-Link DCS-2100+ 22Mbps Wireless Internet Camera to consolidate our security."



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