

Magellan proves to be an invaluable “one stop shop” for users after St John’s School moves to the cloud

We spoke with Mark Sartorius, Assistant Housemaster and Director of E-Learning at St John’s School, Leatherhead, about their recent move to the cloud and the role Magellan from CSE played in its success.

“ The main reasons for the move were flexibility and ease, and because it’s clear that’s the way things are going

Mark Sartorius

St John’s, Leatherhead is a leading independent school for boys and girls aged 11 to 18. Last September the school moved – all at once – to the cloud.

Magellan, the user focussed education portal from CSE, was an essential tool for the school in their shift to become cloud centric, and has played a major role in the smooth transition.

One Stop Shop

Like many schools, St John’s use a raft of programmes and resources for both learning and administration purposes. In their case this includes iSAMS, Firefly, SOCS, CPOMS, OneDrive, Office 365, Kerboodle, Active History along with others.

Each of these systems do a great job in their own right, but together it can become a confusing tangle of icons, logins and passwords for users. Glueing all these systems together into one seamless access point is where Magellan has proved to be most invaluable. It enabled St John’s to bring everything together into simple dashboards for teachers, students and administrators.

“I like the fact that it’s a one stop shop, I really do. Schools are using more and more programmes and there will never be one system that does everything, so what schools really need is one area where users can access all these many systems.”

Each Magellan user has their dashboard configured with the tiles they need, giving them one-click single-sign-on into almost any resource.

“It is quicker to access programmes through Magellan than having to sign into each one individually” comments Mark.

Anywhere, anytime

As a web-based portal, Magellan has enabled staff and students at the school to access everything they need from anywhere, at anytime and with any device.

“One of the things I said when moving to the cloud is that I didn’t want to restrict what sort of computer people can be on – we don’t want finance to be a limiting factor. They can use a Chromebook, they can use the most expensive Macbook Pro – it enables greater flexibility and choice for how pupils access school materials.”

The school is moving more and more to cloud-based storage but think that there will always be a need for local storage too. Magellan enables them to use a hybrid cloud set-up, giving single-sign-on access into OneDrive whilst also providing remote access to files on the local network.

“We do not offer VPN access, but using My Files allows staff as well as pupils to access their files from home.”

The ability to work from home with all the systems and files they have access to when in school has proved very popular with teachers.

“A lot of the staff are really, really pleased with it when they are at home. I use it all the time, I keep it on my iPad and it certainly makes admin a lot easier. For example, I can book rooms now when I’m at home.”

User friendly

Adoption of Magellan by both staff and pupils has been very good.

“The feedback from teachers has been good. You can give it to a member of staff who’s been teaching here for 30 years and they know what to do.”

The school have also found that the tile-based user interface has been a big hit.

“I like the user interface, the tile system is very intuitive and simple. It’s really easy to use.”

Time saving has been another major bonus for the school, especially in the classroom:

“It’s about facilitating learning; I want students to be able to access resources quickly. Magellan enables that because everything that we use in the school is there.

“If I want good collaboration work – say for example I want pupils to be working together, writing paragraphs and so on – I can say to them I’ve set-up a OneDrive folder and I’ve set you a task on Firefly. Magellan is their first stop, and they can work on there and work collaboratively through the browser – that is fantastic, that’s how I would like it to be used.”

St John’s also see the advantages for getting new members of staff up to speed quickly.

“If you have a new member of staff starting, rather than giving them a memory stick with the resources available to them, with the Magellan portal, we can give them easy access to the VLE and our other resources which allows them to prepare and plan in advance.



Conclusion

St John’s are convinced that moving to the cloud without a solution like Magellan to knit everything together would have been unworkable. Furthermore, it’s given the school a great platform moving forward to enable them to introduce new systems and new initiatives such as BYOD.

Mark concludes:

“I use it all the time; on my computer at home, on my iPad, and in school. The staff like it – it’s one of their favourite things of all the upgrades we did over the summer. It’s a nice, one stop shop for everything we use in school which, looking forward, is going to be ever expanding.”



Student



Parent



Teacher

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