



Solution Case Study



Changing the face of education



Stunning scenery aside, Bay of Plenty Polytechnic has a major new draw card to attract students – wireless internet access – thanks to a game-changing partnership between the progressive education provider and BTG.

Key Benefits

- Seamless and secure end-to-end wireless solution across BoPP's two campuses.
- Students can access the internet and BoPP systems from their own wireless devices.
- Quota management system means less cash transactions and increased staff productivity.
- Tutors gain secure wireless access to BoPP corporate resources, the internet and the KAREN network.

"Usually you only hear about IT projects going horribly wrong but this is one we should really be shouting about because it went so well."

- Rabindra Das, IT Manager, Bay of Plenty Polytechnic

Enabling learning

Tauranga-based Bay of Plenty Polytechnic (BoPP) has grown from humble beginnings as a Community College in 1982 to become the largest tertiary institute in the Western Bay. It serves around 12,000 students annually, offering nationally recognised short course, certificates, diplomas and degree programmes and employs over 300 full time staff.

BoPP has a strong focus on nurturing, enabling, empowering and transforming its students and is committed to fostering strategic relationships in order to raise the level of skills in the region and help the community support its own economic growth.

In order to continue on its growth path BoPP needed to address network performance issues and in 2010 committed to a significant upgrade of the network to provide faster, more reliable access to the internet and KAREN networks.

In early 2011, with only limited wireless coverage and an eye on the expectations of its student population, BoPP made the decision to invest in a fully meshed wireless solution.

Rabindra Das, IT Manager BoPP, says the business case for the project was driven by BoPP's vision of empowering its students.

"With many students already using wireless devices such as smartphones and notebooks it made sense to give them the capability to work when and where they choose," says Das.

All that was needed was a technology partner that could share that vision.

Investing wisely

After a competitive tender process BoPP chose to partner with the Tauranga branch of national IT infrastructure company Business Technology Group (BTG).

Das says BTG offered a compelling combination of solid technology, local expertise and depth of experience.

It's worth giving BTG a call today, to keep you going tomorrow.



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“It was important to invest in a well supported system with a trusted and proven manufacturer which is why we went with Motorola. On top of that BTG has a great deal of expertise in the networking arena and, being local, we could rely on very quick responses.”

Das has nothing but praise for the work the BTG team did on the project and believes the level of expertise possessed by BTG engineers helped with delivering the solution in a short time-frame.

“We basically got the go-ahead for the project on Christmas Eve and it had to be ready for the start of term in February. This was a difficult solution to plan and deploy in only six weeks but BTG made it seem painless.”

Ted Ebbing, BTG Solutions Specialist, says his team has unique understanding and experience in the design and delivery of network infrastructure.

Ebbing says that the terms on which his company engages with a client are always the same and says this plays an important part in a successful delivery.

“We’re always asking what best represents the client’s interests and if it was my money, would I spend it this way?”

Good vibrations

Unlike many of the horror stories that surround IT implementations, Das says delivery of the wireless project was incredibly smooth.

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Das describes the reaction from students and staff as very positive and hopes it will be a draw card for new enrolments.

Key to the success of the project, says Ebbing, was getting the foundations right, removing problems and building an infrastructure that will continue to excel as the future load comes on.

“When we did have an issue we had sufficient resources to get it resolved, our top priority is for there to be no impact on the client,” he says.

Molding the future workplace

Ebbing believes projects such as that undertaken by BoPP will speed up changes in the workplace.

“Enabling students to choose their own technologies means the next generation workforce will be demanding the same enablement from their employers. Businesses that have traditionally had IT departments constrain and limit access are already finding the next generation are demanding far more open access to do their jobs.”

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Das agrees and says BoPP wants to stay at the forefront of the technology and encourage students to have more control over their learning process.

“It used to be that students were stuck in sterile computer labs but now I can look outside and see our students working anywhere they choose; sitting outside under a tree or in groups, this is a very sophisticated setup.”

Summary

Bay of Plenty Polytechnic caters to around 12,000 students studying for certificate, diploma and degree qualifications. While the Polytechnic had already upgraded its internet network there was only a limited amount of wireless coverage available for students and staff.

Solution

BTG implemented a Motorola Wi-Fi network solution utilising Wireless Next Generation Platform and Motorola Air Defence for comprehensive management and network security. BTG also assisted in the integration of a student-focused quota management system, Lightwire, which allows students metered internet access under a fair-use policy across wireless and wired networks. If use is exceeded students can top up via a web-based self service portal using their credit card.

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