

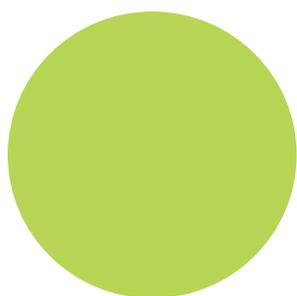


Case Study: Marist College

OFFICE 365

INSPIRING NEW WAYS OF THINKING AND LEARNING IN THE CLOUD

Interview with John Lee, Information Technology Supervisor at Marist College



Marist College Ashgrove is a Roman Catholic day and boarding school for boys, located in Ashgrove, a northern suburb of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. The college, established in 1940, has a primary school for students in grades 5 to 7, and a high school for students in grades 8 to 12. The student roll is approximately 1500 in addition to teaching and administrative staff.



▶ The business need

Marist College's IT infrastructure was already stretched to support existing email and collaboration services for the students and staff. Costs including maintenance, leased lines to the data centre, and firewalls and other software licence costs were mounting. Valuable staff resources were being used to maintain a continuous operation, taking time away from focusing on innovative technologies and data sharing models to enhance learning.

Both students and staff wanted the same level of seamless computing they experienced at home by accessing files from anywhere, easy sharing of data and support for a variety of devices. The existing model required logging into an external drive that was cumbersome and led to security and storage challenges. In addition, it was Marist College's aim to increase student satisfaction by moving to a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) model, which would not be possible with current infrastructure.

To avoid a costly investment in on-premise hardware that would need to be maintained, Marist College made the decision to move to a cloud based model. The next step was determining how to migrate students and staff from the internal server onto the cloud and what the applications and storage needs would be. The school turned to long-term partner and trusted advisor, Insync Technology, to advise them on the best strategy.

▶ The challenge

Provisioning infrastructure for 1500 students was a daunting task. The solution needed to be always on, always available. Zero downtime was a top aim. Missed homework could not be blamed on a lack of available resources.

Although there was a choice of web based email and collaboration services, Insync Technology recommended Microsoft Office 365, in part due to the large amount of storage provided and the proven results in education settings.

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▶ Key outcomes

As a result of their partnership with Insync Technology, Marist College achieved a quick adoption of Microsoft Office 365 throughout the school. The familiarity most students and staff already had with Office helped spur use of the solution and minimised or eliminated training needs.

“We didn’t need to be concerned about the students not adopting it quickly, they have taken to it very well, they are probably so used to using similar things in their personal lives”, said Mr Lee

Students can also access Microsoft OneDrive and SharePoint resources that the school chooses to make accessible. While the college maintains a level of security and control over content, this process does not intrude on the student’s workflow. Marist College’s peace of mind over the availability of storage cannot be underestimated. The school is supplied with ample storage and an easy way to add storage should there be a future requirement. By using a cloud-based solution, the need to manage potentially cumbersome patch roll out processes and upgrades no longer exists.

▶ The results

Marist College prides itself in providing a modern innovative framework for learning. The school expects that over time they will see a large reduction in infrastructure costs and in the IT resources needed to manage its systems. Perhaps more importantly, there is a high level of student satisfaction with the solution. Students can now use any device to access their mail.

▶ The future

With less time being spent on daily infrastructure maintenance, Marist College’s IT department is thinking strategically about their long-term goals. The school’s satisfaction with the cloud migration process has led them to thinking about continuing to move to a cloud based model and redirecting infrastructure investment to support high speed internet access instead of storage and application servers.

Top tips for schools in a similar situation

Mr Lee advises schools and businesses moving to the cloud – “Do your research on the pros and cons of cloud migration and speak to people who know what they are talking about like the team at Insync Technology. Make sure you deal with a supplier who is reliable and can actually do the work. Some will tell you they can, but they can’t”.

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