



Schulnetz Koblenz

The city of Koblenz embarked on a project to modernise its schools' IT systems by creating a single, centralised school network. With an end-to-end Novell environment, schools have a stable, secure, high-performance platform that enabled added functionality, cost savings and improvements to security.

Overview

Schulnetz Koblenz is a project designed to connect all primary, secondary and vocational state-owned schools in Koblenz to a central network. Koblenz is a town situated on the banks of the Rhine in Germany, which boasts a population of over 100,000 people and over forty schools.

Challenge

Schools in Koblenz relied on individual, unconnected networks for their internal e-mail systems and intranet. Administrative staff at each school had access to a separate ASDL connection to the Internet. The fragmented nature of the system made it almost impossible to offer effective central support, with the schools relying heavily on in-house staff and teachers to deal with issues.

Most schools did not have the capability to track pupils' Internet browsing behaviour or set up firewalls. An integrated education and administrative network across all schools presented the perfect solution, but the roll out needed to be carried out with minimum disruption to students' learning.

"The main goal of the 'Schulnetz Koblenz' project was to create the most modern school network in Germany," said Ernst Dolkemeier, Director of Studies at the Vocational School for Economics, Koblenz, and one of the project leaders. "By pooling

resources, we could ensure every school in Koblenz would enjoy greater benefits under a centralised, consistent network."

Solution

A team was set up for the project 'Schulnetz Koblenz', including representatives of the school administration agency, data centre, teachers and the city council of Koblenz. The team engaged CampusLAN, a Novell Silver Partner and specialist software developer that focuses on solutions for educational institutions.

Working together, the partners selected an innovative solution involving a CampusLAN user interface based on an extensive suite of Novell software. Vocational schools in Koblenz have a strong tradition of using Novell technology, and 40 percent of pupils in the city go to vocational schools.

"CampusLAN recommended Novell software as the best fit for our needs," said Dolkemeier. "Robustness and reliability were top of our list of priorities, and after assessing similar projects undertaken by other organisations, it emerged that Novell is a common denominator in the most successful examples."

The Schulnetz Koblenz team chose to implement Novell® Open Workgroup Suite, a complete collaboration package that includes Novell Open Enterprise Server

Schulnetz Koblenz at a glance:

Project to create a common network for all public schools in Koblenz

■ Industry:

Education

■ Location:

Germany

■ Products and Services:

Novell Open Workgroup Suite

Novell ZENworks Application

Virtualization

Novell ZENworks Configuration

Management

■ Results:

- *Connected all schools in Koblenz to a reliable, integrated network with a single, secure Internet connection*
- *Reduced the administrative demands of school systems significantly*
- *Created central support system, with automated roll-out of updates, patches and filtering*

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running on Linux*, Novell ZENworks® Configuration Management, Novell GroupWise®, OpenOffice.org Novell Edition and SUSE® Linux Enterprise Desktop.

Each school hosts one server running Novell Open Enterprise Server and CampusLAN software. There is one central server located at a data centre in the city centre, to which the distributed locations are connected to via a VPN tunnel.

The Novell software has the added advantage of high interoperability, enabling the schools in Koblenz to install the solution on existing Windows* workstations and Apple Mac* machines with ease. This allows the schools to easily deploy any Windows-based client software to Windows desktops using Novell desktop management. By using Novell Open Enterprise Server to simplify the management of its heterogeneous environment, Schulnetz Koblenz avoided the extra cost of purchasing alternative hardware and software.

“We were committed to finding a solution which delivered the best performance at a cost-effective price,” said Dolkemeier. “Selecting Novell made this possible, allowing us to maximise integration with our existing hardware and ensure vital programmes at schools were supported.”

The Schulnetz Koblenz team also implemented 2,000 Novell ZENworks Application Virtualization licenses for use in vocational schools. This enables pupils to enjoy faster access to applications, and to run multiple applications simultaneously with no conflicts.

Results

The schools in Koblenz are connected to the Internet via a single central gateway, incorporating filter software, anti-virus

protection, firewalls and logging facilities. Consequently, the city of Koblenz can be confident that its schools have strong security measures protecting pupils from both inappropriate material on the Internet, and malware-related downtime that may interrupt learning.

Using Novell GroupWise has significantly reduced the administrative burden on staff, allowing teachers to handle issues usually reserved for specialised staff. The shared calendaring feature in Novell GroupWise makes schemes such as co-ordinating room reservations possible for the first time.

“Life is a lot easier with Novell GroupWise in place—administrative employees are free to get on with more important work, while the teaching staff enjoys greater autonomy,” said Dolkemeier. “We expect impressive cost savings over the long run as a result of this, especially since employees can now take advantage of a shared pool of support resources.”

Deploying Novell ZENworks Configuration Management enables employees to set up patches and deploy new applications for workstations centrally and roll these out across the entire school network. Automating IT processes enables the city of Koblenz to make significant savings, and re-allocate these resources elsewhere.

“Novell ZENworks Configuration Management takes care of software updates and patching with very little input from staff, allowing them to focus on providing the best possible education to students in Koblenz,” said Dolkemeier. “Working with CampusLAN and Novell has enabled Koblenz to create the most modern school network in Germany, and is an industry model we are sure will be reproduced elsewhere.”



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