

establishment

Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board

students

Aged 12+

no. students

15000

no. sites

22

no. devices

20-285 per site

solution

Impero Education Pro



case study

background

Established in July 2013, Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB) is the amalgamation of Laois Vocational Education Committee and Offaly Vocational Education Committee. A Vocational Education Committee (VEC) was a statutory local education body in the Republic of Ireland that administered some secondary education and most adult education and existed from 1930 to 2013. With 8 post primary schools, 12 further education centres and an increased number of students attending their schools and centres, LOETB were looking for a solution to help manage IT issues effectively across the two counties.

issues

With an increasing amount of students, a greater focus on technology, and more devices, LOETB needed to find a tool to monitor and control all of these devices from a centralised location. Prior to Impero Education Pro, one of the schools within LOETB was utilising NetOp for classroom management, however most schools had nothing in place to control devices in the classroom. Besides classroom management, no software packages were in place to manage the network as a whole, making simple IT tasks lengthy and time-consuming.

solution

Despite not actively looking for a solution at the time, LOETB had already spoken to Impero's team about Impero Education Pro and had a demonstration of the product's functionality. At this point LOETB decided to put a tender forward outlining all of the aspects they needed a potential solution to cover; this included the ability to see all devices from one screen and the ability to install software remotely to multiples sites from one location. Since Impero Education Pro innovatively combines classroom management, network management and online safety, it covered all the requirements illustrated in the tender. LOETB engaged in a rigorous tender evaluation and considered single purpose software packages but realised they would need several different packages to combine the functionality of Impero Education Pro.

implementation

Once the decision was made to go ahead with Impero Education Pro, the implementation of the software across all of the school and centre networks went very well. LOETB had a few minor hiccups along the way, which were to be expected, but all issues were resolved by Impero's technical team easily on the day.

benefits

Since installing Impero Education Pro, LOETB has realised a variety of benefits:

remote control – Making use of the room layout feature incorporated within the console, the IT team can take control of selected or a group of machines, install pieces of software and fix IT issues on-the-fly, even in cases when some may have moved around the room.

extend life – Scheduling the powering on and off of the machines across the school networks prevents machines from being left on overnight and over the weekends. Powering these machines off extends their life so they will not have to be replaced as frequently.

saves time – Many of the school principals have noticed a difference in their electricity bills when compared with previous months prior to Education Pro, highlighting the energy and cost-saving benefits of using Impero Education Pro's power management functionality.

Below: Colin Boyle's summary of Impero Education Pro.

Education Pro is easy to use and has become an essential tool for managing our schools' networks.

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Q&A with Colin Boyle, IT Manager

how does Impero Education Pro help you manage the schools and centres supported by your ETB?

Impero Education Pro has really helped to centralise our IT; we have control of all devices across each network, and I can monitor everything on the server in one place. It's great not to have to travel and locally fix issues - with Impero Education Pro we can remote on and see how many machines are turned on, deal with problems on the network and see which areas have been affected by a problem. As an example one of our bigger schools, with 280 desktop computers, had a virus on the network. We needed to run a specific tool to remove it and manually turning on every computer took 45 minutes. Using Impero Education Pro we can turn on all the computers at once and log in as the administrator, launch a network folder and run the program with a few clicks. That alone is a huge benefit, but it's also a cost saver. On a good day it takes about 50 minutes to get from the administrative site to the furthest school that's 45 miles away. It's become a great piece of kit!

how has Impero Education Pro helped control the classroom?

Recently there has been a big push on collaboration, particularly in the technology-based subjects and computer labs. By using Impero Education Pro the teachers can for example, monitor what students are accessing, push websites to their screen, display a students screen for all the class to see or lock their screens in order to keep them on task and focused. Even simply blocking USBs prevents them from deviating off task. Teachers often got frustrated about how long it would take to get students up and running and on task, but now they can spend more time on topic and benefit from using the technology.

what are your next steps?

Currently we're not utilising the online safety features to their full capacity. For our post primary schools, the government provides filtering tools which is great, but now that YouTube has become more of a teaching tool, it would be great to open this up to more than just teachers. With Impero Education Pro we will be able to pinpoint what students are accessing and prevent them from going on to inappropriate content. We also want to make use of the acceptable use policies; this way the students will know what they are allowed to do prior to logging in and be aware of the schools' internet safety policy.

impero