



1.2 million NSW school students move to Google Apps for Education, reducing total costs by 66%



New South Wales Government
Department of Education and Training

At a Glance

What they wanted to do:

- Reduce costs on IT infrastructure
- Have an email system that is reliable and always available

What they did:

- Deploy Gmail as their new email solution to 1.2 million students
- Retained students' email credentials for a seamless transition experience

What they accomplished:

- Reduced total cost of ownership by 66%
- Brought a large student body on to one unified email system
- Improved communication across campuses and enabled storage of email and documents

Organisation

The NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) is the largest single organisation, public or private, in Australia. The DET delivers high quality, internationally competitive public education and training from early childhood through to secondary and tertiary education through their TAFE NSW courses.

With a recurrent budget of \$11.8 billion, DET is responsible for around 25% of the State's total budget. The DET are responsible for the education of 1.2 million students across NSW. Around 741,000 students are taught by over 50,000 full-time teachers in more than 2,200 NSW Government schools – including pre-schools, primary schools, central schools, high schools, colleges, and specialist schools.

TAFE NSW colleges have over 500,000 enrollments and 10,000 permanent teachers, making it not only Australia's largest training provider, but also among the largest in the world. TAFE NSW has 10 Institutes delivering a wide range of nationally recognised courses at more than 130 metropolitan and regional campuses.

Challenge

At the core of the NSW education system, the DET have a policy to continually review their technology infrastructure to ensure they are delivering high-quality, cost-effective solutions. All of their programs seek the best return on investment in terms of user adoption and low total cost of ownership. Because communication is at the heart of quality education, the need for a robust, high-value and easy-to-use email system was a top priority for the DET.

DET had been using a locally hosted email solution that offered the core functionality they required – but it presented challenges in terms of hidden costs and low user adoption rates. In fact, students were using free internet-based email systems over the DET provided solution. The team at DET were determined to turn the situation around for their 1.2 million students by sourcing a contemporary email system that students would be excited to use and that offered functionality on par with free email alternatives.

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—Stephen Wilson, Chief Information Officer

DET were also looking for a highly scalable solution that could provide rock-solid service levels and 24/7 availability. They needed a system that not only allowed for seamless information sharing but also one that was reliable and accessible from any location at anytime.

Solution

After an extensive Request for Tender process to identify the options for student email services, DET found that Google Apps and Gmail was the solution they

About Google Apps for Education

Google Apps for Education is a free suite of hosted communication and collaboration applications designed for schools and universities. Google Apps includes Gmail (webmail services with integrated voice and video chat), Google Calendar (shared calendaring), Google Docs (online document, spreadsheet, presentation, and form creation and sharing), Google Video (free 10GB of space to securely and privately share videos), and Google Sites (team website creation with video, images, gadgets, and document integration), as well as administrative tools, customer support, and access to APIs to integrate Google Apps with existing IT systems

For more information visit:

www.google.com/a/edu

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—Stephen Wilson, Chief Information Officer

were looking for. Following a successful tender response DET engaged with SMS Management and Technology (SMS), a local solution integrator, to deploy Google Apps to their students.

The implementation and deployment process was divided into two phases and followed a detailed plan with business requirement and quality assurance deliverable constructed by SMS. An iterative approach was taken to the delivery ensuring that functionality was available to DET to test and integrate the solution from the start. Throughout the process Google and SMS worked together to ensure a successful Google Apps implementation.

Students were able to keep their existing email addresses, user names and passwords making the switch to their new email system seamless. With students of all ages, ensuring a simple user experience was vital to the encouragement of adoption.

Benefits

The DET's Gmail rollout increased the email storage allocated to students by a multiple of over 175 times from 35 megabytes to 7 gigabytes. "Gmail has been working flawlessly, particularly considering that we could roll it out in a few months," says DET CIO Stephen Wilson. "It's going fantastically and without a hitch." The feedback from students has been very positive. The number of students now using their DET email is increasing at a steady rate.

The students are now enjoying the benefits of the switch to Gmail. With 7GB of storage, they no longer have to delete their emails. They can easily locate communications with teachers and other students through Google's search technology within their inbox.

For DET, Google Apps proved to be the cost-effective solution they sought. Total cost of ownership was reduced by approximately 66%. "We've modelled it so we can grow substantially on the current email traffic and still have a cost-effective solution." This reduction in costs has allowed DET to inject their savings to other initiatives that will work toward the education of students across NSW.

