

Text Message Server from Avanquest



Avanquest® ProcessFlows

is given an A* by Brockenhurst College

The Customer:

Brockenhurst College is a medium-sized, open access tertiary college situated in the New Forest, Hampshire, serving approximately 2400 full-time sixth form students and about 8000 part-time adult and community learners. They have a Centre of Vocational Excellence in ICT and their Managed Learning Environment Strategy forms part of a programme of continuous quality improvement, which aims to provide the very best learning opportunities for all students. In 2004, the college was placed in the top 10 FE Colleges in England following an Ofsted report.

The Problem:

The college places high priority on good communication within their community, but communicating with students can be a real challenge. Traditional methods such as letters are typically expensive and can take several days to be delivered. The college wanted a cost-effective solution which would enable them to communicate instantaneously with students and parents. Realising that a substantial percentage of them had mobile phones, it was considered wise to maximise on this communication medium. The consensus was that SMS messaging would provide a ubiquitous, more-or-less instant, messaging application. For most users it's the convenience factor of SMS that appeals - it provides a mobile way to organise.

Personal tutoring and supporting learners is a high priority for the college, who offer online personal tutoring. Robin Gadd, MLE Manager at Brockenhurst College comments "Effective tutorial support goes straight to the bottom line - bums on seats in classrooms means money for the college - so it's essential that the College pursues every avenue to ensure effective support and service to its consumers (the students), an SMS option is an ideal enhancement for this."

The Solution:

Robin says "We implemented what we call our Managed Learning Environment (MLE) Strategy. This is essentially an information systems integration programme, linked to business process review/re-engineering and communications modernisation. SMS is a key technology within the architecture. I investigated the market for an SMS solution to run with Novell Netware/GroupWise and Windows web systems."

So they turned to Avanquest to implement an SMS messaging service, which would enable tutors to contact pupils quickly and easily, as well as providing a solution to handle incoming enquiries which would allow the college to provide a self-service information option for all students.

Text Message Server brings SMS to the desktop via the LAN, without the need to deploy new hardware. "This suits our requirements exactly" said Robin, who went on to say "The service and account management has been excellent and the installation was on time and without problem".

Text Message Server is configured to allow SMS messaging from e-mail and applications interfaces, allowing SMS messages to be sent from an email client, such as MS Outlook, just as you would send a normal email. The modem is attached to the web server and set-up to enable two-way messaging via GroupWise, or through integration into the student support system, EMILY.

Robin said "The options suggested by Avanquest were straight forward and fitted well with our existing systems. A self-service option for parents to request information by SMS enables communication directly with students and parents at



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Robin Gadd, MLE Manager

the click of a button and tutors use Emily on a daily basis to monitor attendance and to relay information to learners."

The Benefits:

Robin concludes, "We expect Text Message Server to move our MLE strategy forward in terms of on-demand accessibility to information. Messaging is a key way in which tutors hope to save considerable amounts of time, eliminating the need to chase around the campus in pursuit of individuals. Cost is a key issue that we will be keeping under careful review to quantify cost of messaging against potential costs saved in time and effort. We are confident this will be favourable."

Over the next few months, Brokenhurst will be launching a new SMS service, enabling all students to sign up for text alerts on future courses, events and special offers from the college.

