



Customer Story

Education Industry

Education

Ireland's Premier Technology Institute Gets High Marks for Giving its Staff & Students Centrally Managed BYOD Access, By Ericom



The Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB), located in North County Dublin in Fingal, has a reputation for leadership in technology education. Home to two academic schools — Business & Humanities and Informatics & Engineering — offering a range of hands-on, vocational programmes to over 3000 students at a modern 56-acre campus, ITB has been pursuing its mission of making education accessible to a diversity of students since 1999. ITB is also part of the Technological University for Dublin Alliance, a formal alliance established in October 2011 between ITB, Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and Institute of Technology Tallaght (ITT). The three institutions have been working together to develop the future Technological University for Dublin.

“The move to Ericom Connect has resolved our license sharing challenges, enhanced IT support capabilities and delivered a robust 24/7 BYOD learning environment that is comfortably capable of accommodating the college's future expansion plans.”

Dave Curran
IT Manager, ITB



CUSTOMER
Institute of Technology
Blanchardstown

INDUSTRY
Education

PRODUCT

Ericom Connect®

CHALLENGES

- Deliver a comprehensive BYOD management ecosystem suitable for today's multi-device/multi-OS world
- Extend the life of existing hardware
- Provide secure, managed access to shared network and professional apps, for users, wherever they are
- Enable 24/7 teaching and learning via access to data & applications

SOLUTIONS

- Ericom Connect Professional edition selected to address business challenges, as well as lower costs and enhance operational efficiency
- IT systems equipped with full-redundancy to ensure services availability at all times.

BENEFITS

- Two-day roll-out of BYOD project
- Remote access to hosted heavy-duty apps, e.g., CAD/CAM, from personal devices, keeps proprietary data safe
- Extended the life of existing PCs with security and full IT systems redundancy
- Improved IT resource planning for project performance and application needs, including more accurate forecasting of license requirements.
- Browser-based access to applications simplifies user experience and encourages widespread adoption of services.

“Ericom was in and fully operational within two days!”

A desire to expand the range of local network and online learning services available to staff and students led the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB) in Dublin, Ireland, to look for a cost effective approach capable of prolonging the life of 100 aging PCs and providing remote access to services from any device, anywhere, at any time.

It was equally important that the solution should be innovative and in keeping with ITB's outstanding reputation in technology. For this reason it had to meet two additional criteria. First, to be capable of delivering a simple, yet comprehensive BYOD management ecosystem. Second, to work seamlessly across today's multi-device/multi-OS user-base and be flexible enough to handle whatever technology advances the future might bring.

The college had been using a Microsoft Unified Access Gateway to provide students with a limited range of local network and web-based services. The objective now was to expand these so that students could enjoy access to shared network drives and learning applications from any device even when they were not on campus. With its entire IT infrastructure based on Microsoft, ITB first sought to achieve this by trialing Microsoft's desktop technologies. However, this failed to provide ITB with the ubiquity of services they were looking for. They then partnered with the IT service provider Loughtec to develop a simple, yet comprehensive BYOD management environment suitable for today's multi-device/multi-OS world.

One of the biggest challenges faced by ITB revolved around the issue of software license sharing. Students wanted access to services from their own laptops, home PCs and mobile

devices but there were strict license rules governing how many concurrent users could access applications at any one time. The incumbent system did not give ITB's support staff sufficient information or flexibility to be able to manage this effectively. The college also asked for the project to allow them to prolong the life of 100 aging PCs by including them as part of the expanded virtual desktop estate.

“Ericom Connect's HTML5 browser-based access has proven a very natural experience for end-users, ensuring a remarkably rapid take-up of service.”

Dave Curran
IT Manager, ITB

Another major challenge was that ITB wanted its learning environment to be available 24/7 so that teaching and learning might continue to take place remotely in multiple locations, including online, day and night. This meant any new system had to have robust redundancy built in.

WIN-WIN FOR STUDENTS AND FOR IT SUPPORT

After looking at a number of commercial and open source solutions ITB selected Ericom Connect Professional as a highly available and affordable way to manage its license sharing issues and so provide students with more reliable access to services at all hours.

A key motivation for this choice was Ericom's virtual managed access environment. Its built-in business intelligence that provides IT support staff with a holistic view of utilized system resources, users and session activity. Such detailed, at-a-glance systems' status reporting allows administrators to track application and desktop usage in great detail. This in turn helps them to optimize IT resources in line with fluctuating demand for shared services at different times of the day and night. The ability to constantly monitor user productivity, measure system workload and health additionally leads to more accurate forecasting of license requirements.

Equally important was a high availability that is unmatched in the industry. Powered by a robust, advanced Grid Architecture, Ericom Connect provides ITB with full systems redundancy capable of guaranteeing them the continuous up-time needed to deliver a 24x7 learning environment. All data is stored in grid memory. In the event of a failover data is automatically handled by another machine in the grid without any impact on performance. At the same time all business logic, state information and health status across the grid is universally shared with the IT management team.

The introduction of Ericom Connect software into ITB's end-to-end Microsoft Windows Server data center provided students and staff with fully redundant managed access to core applications and data from any device, anywhere simply from their browser. The entire BYOD project was completed in just two days with no noticeable interruption to services.

ITB's data center publishes a range of administration and student services





including up to 25 leading remote learning applications. Some — like CAD/CAM — are high-end programs that normally require substantial dedicated infrastructure to run on. However, with Ericom's centrally managed virtual environment students can even run CAD/CAM operations remotely from an iPad.

EFFICIENCIES ADD UP TO A BRIGHT FUTURE

In addition to delivering a comprehensive BYOD management strategy the Ericom centrally managed virtual environment has extended the life of approximately 100 aging PCs. It has even resolved a long-standing issue affecting students wanting to print on campus. Previously they would have to use one of the on-campus computers and print locally which would often mean having to wait for a machine to become free. Now they

simply upload documents via their own device and use the university Pay-for-Print application to print their material out on one of the on-campus printers. It has saved the cost of having a dedicated computer lab for printing and turned out to be an innovative solution to a complex problem.

"The wireless print experience is a great example of how Ericom's browser-based access has proven a very natural experience for end-users, ensuring a remarkably rapid take-up of services," said Dave Curran, IT Manager, ITB. "From an admin perspective the move has resolved our license sharing challenges, enhanced IT support capabilities and delivered a robust 24/7 BYOD learning environment that is comfortably capable of accommodating the college's future expansion plans."

"Our experience with ITB fully demonstrated the simplicity and versatility of the Ericom Connect access management platform," said Cathal Green, Director at Loughtec. "From a technical perspective the whole system was in and fully operational within two days without end-users reporting any noticeable service interruptions — as far as we are concerned there can be no higher praise than that."

Looking to the future ITB is at the heart of plans to combine three institutions into one technological university. The flexibility and elasticity of Ericom Connect's platform which can easily scale to tens of thousands of users using a single system, is comfortably equipped to support the college's future expansion plans.

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