Case Study

Empowered by Innovation

NEC

Central Institute of Technology WA

Customer

- Central Institute of Technology WA

Industry

- Education & Training

Challenges

- Competitive higher education marketplace
- Too much of Central's annual budget per year was spent on paper
- Limitations on staff collaboration and interaction with students

Solution

- Microsoft SharePoint Intranet, Content and Document Management solution

Services

- Business and system analysis
- Architecture
- Solution implementation

Results

- Immediacy and ease of course content uploads
- Improved lecturer collaboration
- Effective online interaction between students and staff
- Streamlined administrative workflow

Applications

- Microsoft SharePoint

The Customer

Central Institute of Technology WA (Central) is one of Australia's largest training organisations with five campuses located in the Perth cultural and business district hubs of Northbridge, Leederville, East Perth, Mt Lawley and Nedlands. It provides innovative, nationally accredited courses to more than 30,000 students annually and also offers customised training programs to employers, business and industry.

The Challenges

Central was spending a significant amount of their annual budget per year on paper, printing and associated consumables. Its staff intranet was 10 years old and Central had no student-facing portal for interactions with lecturers. It also required students to mail assignments to a Locked Bag address.

Two portal projects for student and staff communications were needed to streamline the processing of Central's 400 technical and professional training courses.

SharePoint and Central Institute of Technology go digital and shift the cultural reliance on paper and printing

Colin MacDonald, Chief Information Officer at Central Institute of Technology, said: "Central operates in the highly competitive education sector. We are actively responding to market expectations. Our students want to be free of paper and have the immediacy of online content and interaction with their lecturers. We're breaking the cultural reliance on printing and creating a new, more efficient norm."

Document and content management, as well as the associated intranet development, is usually undertaken in three separate projects but Central's brief wrapped these together in a large and bold venture which had to be delivered in a tight timeframe prior to the start of a new teaching term.

The Solution

MacDonald headed a team that selected a SharePoint solution as it was already bundled within Central's Microsoft enterprise agreement and underpinned the existing intranet and marketing site.

Central went to market with its system requirements and NEC was commissioned to undertake the business and system analysis and to build and implement two portals: a staff intranet (CentralNet) based on the SharePoint 2010 platform which includes FAST Search; and a student portal which was to be integrated with the course scheduling system.

"NEC was selected largely on price but what also set them apart was their experience in the higher education sector. NEC has the complete service offering as well as the accredited engineers and developers. They understood both the demands of our business and the technical complexities," MacDonald said.

"There's no 'out of the box' with SharePoint and it required the combined input of our internal resources and NEC's specialist SharePoint architect to ensure the success of the project," he said.

Following extensive workshops with Central stakeholders to define an appropriate information architecture, NEC created a fully-customised look and feel for the staff portal.

> **"The business case for the Sharepoint project is to see a considerable reduction in the use of paper and printing over the next few years. This will allow us to better direct that budget allocation to improving student learning outcomes."**
>
> **- Colin MacDonald, Chief Information Officer, Central Institute of Technology**

The staff intranet is also driving workflows within administrative areas of Central including HR and Professional Development (Academic Policies and Procedures). The portal facilitates jobs, induction, pay and benefits, industrial agreements, professional development and occupational health and safety functionality.

The second portal pushes out learning plans and resources to students, and allows students to contact teaching staff and submit work.

To manage the adoption of the changing communications platform, MacDonald described Central's strategy as: "We're reducing each staff member's printing limit and removing some of the printers as the stick; and we're using SharePoint as the carrot."

The Results

MacDonald reports that feedback from the teaching and administrative staff is very positive: "They all see it as an excellent improvement, primarily because it's so easy to use. They are able to simply publish lecture material to the portal. No longer do they have to request print jobs, wait and then carry large volumes of paper to class.

"And the students, they just expect it. This is how it should be.

"Texts and other teaching content are now pushed out to students. And students can work up to the bell before hitting the 'send' button for immediate, secure delivery of their assignments."

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