The Rowan Learning Trust

The Rowan Learning Trust (RLT) was established as a Multi-Academy Trust in 2012. Currently the RLT family comprises four schools: two Secondary Schools, a Primary School and an all-through Alternative Provision Academy.

The Trust began assessing what they'd need to implement to grow successfully. They realised scalability was key to their success and that they'd need an IT partner who could help them deliver.

The Challenge

RLT wanted to build a single and secure stable network that all the Trust schools could work on and use to share resources. This idea of a common network meant they needed a fast and reliable internet connection.

Following a poor experience with their local authority, they knew they'd need to move to a new Internet Service Provider (ISP). Because Virtue have been an ISP for over 10 years and (at the time) supported over 150 schools with their provision, RLT were interested in how Virtue's service could scale to meet their needs.

In our initial talks with The Rowan Learning Trust, we explained they'd need a robust ICT Infrastructure foundation on which to build upon. This would mean auditing each schools current servers, storage and cabling. We also discovered they were using a mix of different IT security solutions from a range of vendors. We felt they'd benefit from migrating the schools onto one consistent solution that'd be a good fit for all users.

x4
Improvement in Network Speed

x6
Faster Login Times

x3
Increase in Internet Uptime

> "
> I would (and regularly do) recommend Virtue Technologies to other education establishments We have an excellent, open and honest relationship with the team at Virtue. They're very switched on and completely understand the education sector. They've always helped us to select the products that are right for us and they're very proactive whenever we experience any IT challenges."
>
> - John Robinson, Trust Director of Operations,
>   The Rowan Learning Trust

> "
> The excellent relationship we have with manufacturers, like Sophos, enables us to provide high-quality products and industry insights to our customers. I'm proud that our team's outstanding service is constantly commented on as is the expertise of our dedicated in-house service specialists. We always deliver fit-for-purpose solutions and it's been fantastic to work and grow with The Rowan Learning Trust, knowing they understand that about us."
>
> - Philip McNair, Sales Director,
>   Virtue Technologies Limited

1,620
Teaching Minutes Saved per Month
Failing IT was causing problems with lesson delivery, now it works, teaching time is no longer lost.

38
Projects Delivered
Across RLT & their individual Trust Schools since January 2019.

5,769
Staff & Students Supported
The Teaching & Support Staff and Students across the Trust rely on our IT Solutions.

The Benefits

Our years of experience in developing trust wide strategy and planning has enabled us to continually support The Rowan Learning Trust as they grow. RLT have gained from our expertise in reducing costs without reducing services and they continue to benefit from the support our dedicated team of specialists working alongside their IT Team provide.

Virtue support RLT, and our other Trusts at a Director-led level. Managing Director, Simon Steele, holds termly meetings with John to help the trust focus and plan their development priorities. Working with the Rowan Team at a strategy level enables us to support their plans more effectively and advise on the ways industry changes could impact them.

We asked RLT's Director of Operations, John Robinson what makes Virtue Technologies stand out to him, he said *"Virtue is a level above in terms of customer service. The Help Desk Team are always willing to go the extra mile. With Virtue it's a partnership, we can bounce ideas off people and get genuine advice. I know I can ring Philip McNair, the Sales Director and talk things through with him, without feeling like we're going to get a sales pitch. Because Virtue focus on education, they know that it's about the students, and they really care about the ethos of the school. They actually understand what goes on in schools, it's not about a computer on a desk, it's about the experience for the students."*

- Our expertise in trust-wide strategy & planning development is Director-level led
- We've delivered fit-for-purpose Trust-wide solutions and built their IT foundations
- Because we're educational focused, we understand the diverse needs of the Primary & Secondary Schools, developing solutions that support them both
- We've got a proven track record in reducing costs without reducing services
- RLT gain from our extensive experience working alongside their IT Teams & providing service support

The Solution

01	**Building one single, scalable network** We built a dedicated private core network (PWAN) for RLT, the whole network is protected by a dedicated firewall and customised to each school's specific requirements. This single network has formed the foundations for all future cross-trust projects. Now in place, this network enables any computer on any of the Trust's sites to directly access any available RLT resource, irrespective of its location and without exposing the Trust or user to the risks of the internet.
02	**Cost saving through consolidation** Next, we set about consolidating a number of services to reduce costs, simplify the management and enable greater collaboration. Firstly, we designed a new Active Directory Service structure and implementation plan with the Trust's IT Team. This brought all the Trusts schools into a single environment, whilst enabling them to retain their individual identities. To maximise the value of this investment, the Trust's virtualised server infrastructure was upgraded and redesigned to enable them to share educational resources across the trust.
03	**Linking solutions to build a single platform for growth** We then consolidated the individual Office 365 environments into a single Office 365 platform. As well as creating a single point of control and management for the IT Team, it provided a single email and calendar environment across the whole Trust. By linking the Office 365 environment to the Trust's new Active Directory, we significantly simplified the ongoing management of users for their IT Team. Creating one Office 365 environment also allows true cross-Trust collaboration and makes resources sharing a lot easier and safer.
04	**Protecting it all with enterprise-grade security** The final technology aspect of the plan was to consolidate the Trust's security. We worked with them to deploy Sophos Central to provide visibility across all schools under one single portal. This looks after their web filtering and includes Intercept X to protect them against ransomware attacks. Shortly after Intercept X was installed the Trust experienced an attempted ransomware attack. They were able to see that the attack had been isolated and stopped in its tracks!

100% of System Threats Averted
No system is 100%, but they've had no breaches to the Network since implementing Sophos with us.

88.5% Overall Customer Satisfaction
Averaged total scored on customer's Project based satisfaction surveys.

100% of Requests Addressed within SLAs
There's also been a x3 Increase in Change Request Speed since Virtue took over the Trust's Support