



Education

Flexible and affordable MDAemon email server enables Scottish school to easily connect multi-language users

St. George's School for Girls was established in the late 1800's to provide exceptional learning opportunities for students, using excellent teaching and individual support. The school has more than 1,300 users on its network, and wanted each area of the school—which encompasses twelve separate buildings—to have equal access to all the available network resources as well as any future services, such as streaming audio and video.

Nine years ago the school had a limited network infrastructure, based entirely in the main secondary school building. Ambitious plans were put in place to significantly improve IT within the school, and to expand the use of email and Intranet services over a state-of-the-art fibre LAN.

John G. Hammell, Network Administrator at the school explains:

“It was difficult to find a high spec, low-cost and reliable email system with support for multiple languages.”

“We were looking for an email system that would allow us to provide low-cost, reliable email to both staff and boarders, but it was relatively difficult to find one that could not only provide a full email system—that included the required collection facilities, Anti-Virus, and some form of content filtering to protect the pupils—but also could support the wide range of nationalities that were at the school, many of whom are from East Asia.”

He found Microsoft Exchange to be very expensive, and required a large server to host it, plus services such as Anti-Virus were very costly.

Introducing MDAemon with its built-in web mail client has allowed students and staff access to email from anywhere in school or at home, in a number of different languages, on any platform. This was ideal for the school, because it had a mix of Acorns, Apples and PCs.

The school purchased MDAemon for four clear reasons: web mail with its easy setup and language facilities; low cost; multi-platform client; and MDAemon's powerful email collection facilities. “We tried other email systems, but each had some problem which made us choose MDAemon after testing. The fact we could allow all our users access to email from home, while many other larger institutions couldn't offer this feature at the time, was a big plus in the decision to purchase MDAemon,” says Mr. Hammell.



ST GEORGE'S
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Customer Profile

Established in the late 1800's, St George's is a large school in Edinburgh, Scotland, for pupils of pre-school age—boys and girls—and then primary one-to-sixth year studies for girls only. With 1,300 users, many of whom are pupils from abroad, the focus is on effective communications—therefore the school has invested in a fast fibre network infrastructure linking several different sites.

Challenge

Low cost, reliable email management for staff and pupils. Multiple-language support, Anti-Virus, Anti-Spam and content filtering. Keeping international pupils in touch with families abroad and enabling email access when on school trips.

Solution

MDAemon email server, SecurityPlus, RelayFax and Outlook Connector.

MDaemon Product Features

Many Outlook installations use IMAP so that users who access email from in-school and when on school trips can be sure all their email is in one place. They can use Outlook and WorldClient at the same time and have email stored centrally.

"We use the web client, WorldClient, extensively, for users in and out of school, many of whom use it when on school trips to the USA, Brazil, Australia and East Asia. We still make heavy use of the various languages the WorldClient interface can be viewed in, such as Chinese and Korean, so this is a valuable feature," says Mr. Hammell.

Staff use ComAgent to monitor new email for the most part, so they don't need to have the full web client up on screen all of the time. However, students are prevented from accessing the Instant Messaging as it can be a distraction in class.

"At the moment, we only use WorldClient on a few mobile devices, such as phones and PDAs, but we

"Active Directory integration is all automatic once setup, so is a valuable and time-saving resource."

have trialed Sony PSPs and they work very well," says Mr. Hammell. The most used collaboration function of WorldClient is the address books for school administration, particularly private mailing groups.

The school uses the Active Directory integration feature a great deal, not only for account creation but also for a large number of mailing lists for staff and pupils. "All department and faculty mailing lists are based on our Active Directory Organisational Unit (OU) setups, so they don't need to be maintained for membership in any way. Active Directory integration is all automatic once setup, so is a valuable and time-saving resource," comments Mr. Hammell.

MDaemon offers important features that solved many of the school's needs

The network needed to extend to the other school buildings, some of which are a mile apart and over awkward obstacles. The task was huge, and would take a great deal of investment as the longest run of fibre was going to need a large amount of building and road work to protect and hide it from view. An important part of the network expansion was to provide access for the school's boarding pupils—who come from all over the world—and allow them to communicate with home as easily as possible.

The school uses SecurityPlus, with its Outbreak Protection, primarily to check outgoing email, and to confirm to recipients that outgoing email has been virus-scanned. In addition, effective spam suppression is essential: "MDaemon's Anti-Spam is the best we have come across over the years, as both the Sophos and Barracuda boxes we tested last year missed many items that MDAemon always correctly caught, so it is a valuable tool in protecting staff and students from unwanted email," says Mr. Hammell.

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RelayFAX is used by staff to allow them to fax directly from the PC desktop anywhere in or out of school. "It's a very reliable product and although it's not used by as many as it could as yet, we feel it is a useful tool to have," says Mr. Hammell. Outlook Connector is used by a number of staff to allow them to share Outlook Calendars. In particular, the Deputy Headmistress and her PA use this feature extensively to synchronise PC calendars and also with a hand-held PDA for portable access.

The school now has over 25 servers in operation, based on Windows 2003 Server. The email server running MDAemon is a Dual Xeon Processor server, with a large RAID for the data and separate drives for the queues and logs to increase performance.

Administration and upgrading is simple and quick, explains Mr. Hammell: "The installation of MDAemon—and the other Alt-N products we use—is very straightforward. With the wizards, even if you are armed only with the minimum of information, it really doesn't take very long to setup a fully working email server. Our initial installation took only a few minutes, and, once the wizard was completed, it was just a case of fine-tuning, altering things as we needed to, or as we implemented the new features available with new versions of MDAemon."



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