Girls' Day School Trust Engages the Next Generation of Girls with Mobile Education

The Mission

The Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) is the leading group of independent girls' schools in the UK with 20,000 students between the ages of three and 18 and nearly 4,000 staff. Established in 1872, the GDST strives to offer girls the best possible education to prepare them to take advantage of the greatest opportunities in life. The school Trust provides its students with a vibrant and supportive environment to help girls fulfill their academic ambitions.

To continue to provide the best in education, many GDST schools decided to introduce mobile devices into the learning process to provide students with a learning device for use at school and at home to promote continuity of learning. However, the GDST soon realised the difficulty in managing a large number of mobile devices across its network of schools. "We have nearly 20,000 mobile devices on our network, and we need visibility into who owns them and what devices they are," said Paul Wheeler, information and communications technology architect, GDST. The application management process in place was also becoming an increasingly large burden on the IT staff's limited time. "Having to call in 20 to 30 devices at a time to install applications on each device was particularly impractical for us, and was not efficient use of our IT resources," noted Wheeler.

With these issues fresh in the minds of the GDST IT team, the school network began searching for an enterprise mobility management (EMM) solution that could accomplish two major goals: simplify device management to save valuable time for IT staff and foster a safe learning environment for students through secured devices.

Solution Overview
- Client: The Girls' Day School Trust
- Industry: Education
- Geography: United Kingdom
- Features: MDM, MAM, MCM, MEM
- Devices: 20,000

The Results

The unique device security and application management needs led the GDST to a single EMM solution: AirWatch® Enterprise Mobility Management. "Because of the matrix structure of the GDST, a vital differentiator we'd found with AirWatch was the ability to delegate various administrative powers to individual schools whilst retaining some overall control at the centre," said Catherine Scutt, head of learning technology and innovation, GDST. Using the VMware® AirWatch® console, the GDST saves its IT staff time and resources by enabling local administrators to manage devices at each school. When

a student at a particular school needs assistance with a device, local teams can help, freeing up time for administrators at the central office to focus on managing the school system as a whole. To address parental concerns around security, the GDST uses internet filtering technology alongside AirWatch to keep students protected from inappropriate content. This helps the GDST keep students focused in a safe learning environment free from the many distractions on the Internet.

The GDST also encourages creative learning by enabling students to suggest mobile apps, Web links and content to their teachers, which increases student engagement and enhances learning with mobile. "Using learning devices to send homework to pupils, who in turn can hand it in for the teacher to mark it on the screen or using voice, greatly improves the workflow between students and teachers," said John Sullivan, digital learning coordinator, Putney High School Junior School, GDST. "At Putney High School, we've embraced the use of iPads for learning throughout our school to fully unlock and support the girls' creative learning potential."

The Girls' Day School Trust has seen improvements all across its organisation due to AirWatch-managed devices. "On the educational level, AirWatch has helped us to enable the use of mobile devices in the classroom, and the GDST has seen a higher engagement from the pupils and positive support from the parents around this," said Richard Martin, head of information and communications technology, GDST. "On a corporate level, we are the 12th biggest charity in the UK and employ nearly 4,000 staff members. Using AirWatch has helped us to enable the type of control and collaboration that is expected of an organisation of our size, and it has enabled us to support all devices for corporate as well as educational use."

What's Next

Many schools within the GDST network are exploring their mobility options depending on each school's needs. A large number of GDST schools are embracing a 1:1 initiative so each student has her own device for learning. Other schools are exploring bring your own device initiatives to provide greater device choice for students. Finally, some schools are opting for deploying shared student devices to offer flexibility.

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