



# Angus College



Angus College is a College of Further Education, with a new building – the Community Access and Learning Centre - housing the College Library and Library Technology Suite where a suite of 80 computer terminals is available for staff and student use.

Until this building opened at Easter 2004 the College Library had a modest ten terminals for student use and bookings were controlled with a manual, paper based log system. This worked well enough but it did lead to problems whereby bookings were difficult to enforce and the ensuing disputes often were time consuming to resolve. With the significant number of terminals now available in the new building it was obvious that a more sophisticated system was essential. In addition, we identified a need to monitor the use of the machines and to be able to produce fairly sophisticated reports on their use by the various student groups.

Only at the start of session 2003 – 2004 did the College adopt a system of individualised student logins and it then seemed the right time to investigate a booking and control system, which could exploit these.

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### The Decision

Several systems were investigated; including MyPC and following two demonstrations from the MyPC team the decision to adopt it was taken. Ease of use for the Library staff making the bookings and clear screen information for students coming to the machines were key considerations in the decision.

### Getting Started

The decision was taken to install the MyPC Booking System within the summer break. This gave Library staff time to familiarise themselves with the system prior to the students returning in August. An additional benefit was that the introduction of the booking system could be part of the induction process, minimising confusion.

It was decided that Library staff would control the bookings rather than having a

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sole terminal where students could book themselves. Students wishing to book must phone or speak to staff directly to book a machine. There have been no problems with this system and currently there is no demand to justify a sole booking terminal.

Our policies were set up in conjunction with MyPC staff. Decisions were based on general observations of how long students spent on machines, what work they were doing and the demand for machines. We also considered the health and safety issue of how long students would sit at a machine without a break.

### **Introduction to Staff and Students**

The Library staff created leaflets and issued emails to explain the new system and the booking procedure to staff and students.

As with all change, the initial period was met with reluctance by some who had been using the old system. Previously, many students who forgot their ID number or password would log on using a "guest account", (the new system does not permit the same account to be logged on more than once at the same time). The new system forced these students to take responsibility for their own account.

Also, the students who tended to "hog" a machine took time to adjust to the restricted time limit. We set it at one hour, making clear to users that this could be extended or, if they required a terminal for a longer period, we advised them to book in advance.

Staff adapted extremely quickly and regular tutors who used the terminals for classes were pleased with the new booking procedures and advance block booking facility. Staff are notified of the numbers of their booked PCs in advance which means students know exactly where to sit. The 'reserved message' on screen is easily noticed and students arriving for independent study immediately look for another terminal.

### **How MyPC is Being Used Now**

Since installing the system it has become clear that the work of the Library and its Technology Suite would have been virtually unmanageable without MyPC. Not only has the ability to monitor and control student access been invaluable but the system has assisted staff in enforcing

the current 'IT Rules and Regulations Policy'. The ispy feature is also very beneficial, allowing staff not only to check on suspicious activity but also to assist students remotely. The Report facility is used regularly to run off specific details of students; i.e., name of student, PC number, log on and log off times and total PC usage time for the day.

One of the main benefits of MyPC is the time it has saved. Library staff can see at a glance which PCs are available and the bookings for the day. The actual booking of machines takes a few minutes and can be edited very easily. The system is simple and clear to use, for both staff and students and is easily customised, any changes to the on screen messages taking effect immediately. An unforeseen benefit of the system is that it has forced students to take responsibility for their study time and also possession of their student cards.

The success of MyPC is such that it is planned to roll it out across all College sites with Computer Classrooms in the near future.

**This Case Study was written by Charlie Rosie (Library Manager) and Amanda Crighton (Flexible IT Administrator) Angus College.**



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