



# Chesterfield College

By Richard Houghton



@ Chesterfield College  
LearningMatters

**Chesterfield College started life in 1841 as the Chesterfield and Brampton Mechanics' Institute, and went through various incarnations, including the merger in 1984 of Chesterfield Art College and Chesterfield College of Technology, before becoming Chesterfield College we now know.**

**We have over 21,000 students studying hundreds of different courses and there are around 3,600 full-time students with the college offering over 30 higher and professional qualifications. The college also undertakes courses in the community in 19 locations across the North-east.**

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## Introduction

Before the introduction of MyPC we had 125 pcs in 4 learning centres across 2 sites. In order to make a booking both staff and students had to book and attend bookings with the admin desk staff. This situation had potential problems as our staff come from mixed backgrounds, some with lots of experience of our previous booking system to those from a pure library background with little pc experience.

With our previous system we had poor technical support often leaving us to troubleshoot problems and suggest fixes. It was also far too dependent on a range of live links to other data systems being available. If we lost a link it would prevent the whole system from working properly.

The previous system was also quite difficult to set-up and manage and also posed problems with updates. We had also reached the ceiling for the number of clients we could have, which we believe was causing a number of our technical issues.

## Before and After

Our previous booking system had not been web based so staff had to use specified pcs to manage and make bookings. Since MyPC is, it is far easier to manage and if we lose a desk pc we just drop in another pc with a standard web browser and off you go.

The previous system of booking with staff also made for long queues of students and staff at the beginning of sessions, which put pressure on the admin desk staff.

**At first I was concerned that the new system would present our staff with a steep learning curve that could have overwhelmed them – especially those that had no experience of using a booking system. However, after the first week, we were pleasantly surprised that all learning centre staff were using it without any major issues.**

Since MyPC has been put in place we chose to keep the booking at the desk but students / staff can now self attend bookings thus allowing the admin desk staff to spend more time assisting students in the learning centres.

### **Why we chose MyPC**

We chose to opt for MyPC for various reasons:

- Technical support – the ability for ITS to have a direct connection to our server in order to resolve technical difficulties.
- Web based interface.
- Ease of use.
- Ease of management.
- Ease of technical administration including auto update of clients when a new version is released.
- Ease of adding new pcs to the system.
- Better reporting facilities – we can easily create reports on usage within the learning centres.

### **Benefits of MyPC - For staff and students**

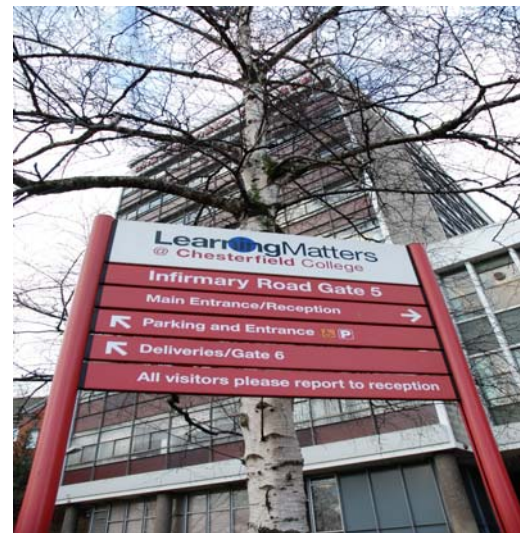
We have found that self-attending booking frees up lots of time for both staff and students. It is also extremely simple to administer MyPC and students instantly know how much time they have left of their booking by checking the desktop icon. They also receive automatic warnings that their booking is coming to an end which prompts them to save their work.

### **How MyPC is being used now**

We currently have MyPC installed in 6 learning centres with around 160 computers managed across 3 sites. Students and staff make bookings at any admin desk and then self attend their bookings. We decided to make the most of MyPC being able to handle different set-ups and so have some that can only be used for 15 minutes, some for one hour and others that are for two-hour use.

### **Staff reaction**

At first I was concerned that the new system would present our staff with a steep learning curve that could have overwhelmed them – especially those that had no experience of using a booking system. However, after the first week, we were pleasantly surprised that all learning centre staff were using it without any major issues.



### **How MyPC integrated with other systems**

During installation we had some teething problems with our Active Directory import. This was due to the fact that we had many security groups in our AD. When the users were imported the MyPC interface tried to show them all. The other problem was that the import would fail due to authentication issues. During the process of ironing out these glitches the ITS technical team were very supportive and we soon found the value of the support they gave us both over the wire and onsite.

**This Case Study was written by Richard Houghton, MLE & Business Systems Administrator, Chesterfield College.**

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