iTS:MyPC

Case Study: Sir George Monoux College

About the College

Sir George Monoux College is a sixth form college in North East London. It is a lively, dynamic and award-winning college, achieving excellent A Level and BTEC Vocational results. The college comprises 2,000 students and approximately 180 teaching and support staff. The Learning Resource Centre moved to its current location in a modern purpose-built block, the Drapers Building, in 2004. The Learning Resource Centre is contained in one open-plan room of approximately 950sq m. The LRC can accommodate 200 students at any one time. There are 80 student PCs, plus a combination of single study carrels and tables for 2, 4 or 6 students. The LRC team comprises 9 people working from fifteen to 37 hours per week each.

All student PCs at Sir George Monoux College have the same desktop, offering consistent access to software across the college. In addition to the 80 open-access PCs in the Learning Resource Centre, there are a further forty student PCs available on a walk-up basis in the college's IT Suite, and in the Student Zone which is a less formal space.

Within the LRC, 6 PCs have scanners, and one PC has a large monitor. There are 3 black & white and two colour printers in the Learning Resource Centre. The LRC student computers are split into three "bays". Bay 1 comprises 24 PCs in the area of the LRC that is designated for quiet talking and working in small groups. Bays 2 and 3 are in the Silent Study Area, and comprise sixteen and 40 student PCs.

MyPC at Sir George Monox College

MyPC was installed in 2005, and was selected to assist LRC staff in meeting the challenge of managing student access to, and use of, many computers in a large open-plan area. Previously a paper-based system had been used to manage student use of fewer computers in the college library.

On a day-to-day basis the LRC staff use MyPC to manage student behaviour in Bays 2 & 3. Students who talk are sent standard messages, and once they have received 2 warnings for talking in the Silent Study Area, will be logged off their computer and will also receive a 2-day ban from the entire Learning Resource Centre. The rules for acceptable use of the computers in the Silent Study Area are clearly explained to all students during their college induction.

Students found using any college computer inappropriately, for example for playing games, will be logged off the PCs and will have their IT accounts suspended. All episodes of inappropriate behaviour in the LRC are reported to the students' tutors.

Student IT accounts are managed throughout the college using Active Directory, and access to the LRC is controlled using the college's ID card and turnstile software Event Monitor. The LRC has its own entrance & exit turnstiles which are on the same network as all turnstiles across the college. The LRC team is aware of the facility to control individual student's access to resources using MyPC, but continues to use the college's central systems. Future plans may however see more extensive use being made of this aspect of the MyPC product.

"I've put together some benefits of the system, but I'm sure there will be more that I haven't discovered yet.

1. Enables students to be identified via their ID numbers on screen

2. All students can be contacted remotely using predefined warnings, and also via the Free Text Facility

3. Available PCs can be identified on screen in order to support student allocation

4. All PCs can be closed down remotely

5. Enables PC to be booked in advance, especially during busy periods

6. User times can be extended

7. Enables Teaching staff to block-book PCS

8. Individual PCs can be controlled, i.e. logged-off "

Brian Whyte, LRC Assistant

The Block Booking feature of MyPC is used every week to reserve Bay 1 for use by classes. This LRC service is very popular with teaching staff as it enables them to gain access to computers and also to have easy access to the print and DVD resources in the Learning Resource Centre. LRC staff place the block booking on behalf of teachers and arrangements are confirmed by telephone or e-mail.

"Bay 1:
- Like having everything under one roof: Computers, Books, Newspapers/ Magazines. Student can only use 'toilet break' as an excuse to leave bay one. All old excuses such as left USB in LRC, account disabled, I need to print, need a book etc cannot be used anymore.
- Encourages independent learning as well as enhance learning with whole environment.
- Develops other skills such as trust to get on with work, responsibility with returning all resources at right places."

Sukhi Thind, AS Coordinator for Business, Accounts & ICT

"Use of Bay 1 in the LRC is essential for my AS and A2 students because my classroom does not have computers. Recently the students were able to work in groups in the bay and compile power-points on different topics. They sat in formations of four or five and discussed the set task as they completed the work.
It is very convenient to work in the LRC because the students can access course text books to research relevant Sociologists, explore the internet for visual images and complete their presentations in the time allotted. The desks are arranged so that it is easy to check that each student has contributed to the group's finished product.

The completed presentations were saved onto the student shared pool as well as my staff Sociology USB. Each group gave their presentations on separate subjects when they were back in the classroom. It was a very effective learning experience which the students enjoyed."

Marion Permaul, Teacher of Sociology and Health & Social Care

Reports generated from MyPC are used extensively by the Learning Resource Centre Manager in the LRC's Quality File, and provide excellent evidence of the high level of use of the LRC computers. Data on the percentages of machines in use across the college day and week has also been benchmarked against information from CoLRiC national surveys.

95% of students use the LRC either daily or weekly. In the 2008 LRC Student Survey 72% of students said they could use a PC when they wanted to. This is an improvement on the previous year when 61% of students claimed they could access the LRC computers when they wanted to. Student use of the facility to pre-book PCs in the LRC remains low, but with almost three quarters of the students claiming to have no problem with accessing PCs when they want this is not surprising. Of the 68,000 bookings made between 1st September 2008 and 13th February 2009, less than 1% were Advance Bookings and over 97% of bookings were Walk-Up.

The settings in MyPC are easy to adjust, especially the policies concerning opening times. Although the LRC closes to students at 3pm on Wednesdays, one class undertaking the new extended project (EPQ) qualification enjoys access to the LRC from 3.15pm-5pm every week. On Wednesdays the LRC computers close at 2.45pm and all students leave. At 3.15pm the Bay 2 computers only become available for students to use until 5pm. MyPC assists greatly in managing students in and out of the LRC, especially on Wednesdays when students not participating in Enrichment activities are expected to leave the college at 3pm. MyPC helps the LRC staff and the EPQ teachers to ensure that only the EPQ class is in the LRC after 3pm.

"The booking system is clear and efficient and the booking details are displayed on the screens which is very helpful"

Ian Wainer, Advanced Practitioner Tutorial

Future plans for MyPC at Sir George Monoux College

The Learning Resource Centre team is keen to link MyPC to our library management system (Heritage). The LRC team believes that preventing students with overdue library items logging on in the LRC will help us to reduce losses. Also, students "hanging onto" popular items that have been reserved by other students will become less of a headache for staff and students alike.

The success of MyPC at Sir George Monoux College is largely due to the robustness and straightforwardness of the product for the end user. At this college we are also incredibly fortunate to have enjoyed consistently excellent support from the college's small in-house IT Support team.

"From an IT support point of view, MyPC gives us no trouble at all. The only time we need to get involved is when we need to upgrade the software to a newer version. This is simple task also. The LRC team deal with the normal day-to-day running and administration of the system and users. The support from the company, when needed, is excellent."

Mike Ward, Information Systems Manager; Jude Ndu, Network Manager

"I find that using MyPC in the silent bays to be very useful, rather than having to get into heated discussions when wanting to tell a student to be quiet I find it easier to send a first warning to them, a lot of the time this seems to have the desired effect and if a second warning has to be sent I have found that the student will usually log off and leave the silent bay before reaching the third and final warning.

I also find it useful to send free text on MyPC say for instance if a student is chewing gum I can ask them to throw it in the bin or if they have their hood up to remove it, I find this easier than having to talk to them across the room or to go over and ask them.

Its easy to use and very useful for the students to reserve a PC for a particular day and time, especially if a lot of the PC's are going to be in use. Bay 1 gets very busy and not all students like to work in the silent bays so reserving a computer on MyPC gives them the option to work in which ever bay they choose."

Janet Purkiss

"There are many things I like in MyPC, here are the most important ones: -MyPC is really useful especially in libraries like ours, where there is a huge silent bay with lots of PCs, because with my MyPC members of staff can communicate with students silently through messages.

- It's easy to use it and it's multifunctional, it helps us to work quickly and smoothly.

- By sending messages through MyPC we can avoid verbal confrontation with students.

- If once we are logged on we are able to see all PCs of each bay on the screen, so we can advice students which PC is available, or when it gets really busy we can even tell them when will they be able to use a PC as soon as possible by checking the ending times of the PCs' sessions.

- With MyPC we can even check logged on students' ID numbers, so in case of a persistently talking student who needs to be banned from the LRC MyPC makes it easier for us to find out the student's ID number.

- Students, as well as members of staff can reserve PCs with MyPC, which is very useful when a student wants to make sure to be able to use a PC in a certain time and bay.

Overall MyPC does make a difference in an LRC assistant's work, it makes it professional and smooth. I mean just to think about not having it…:S"

Zsofia Erb, LRC Assistant

**Sue Medd BLib MCLIP
LRC Manager
Sir George Monoux College**

This case study was written by staff at Sir George Monoux College

Designed by ITS Marketing Department