

# Case Study



## Hartlepool College of Further Education

A flexible thin client solution with remote access capability



**cutter**

## Solution Overview

750 seat Sun Ray thin client environment

Remote access with Oracle's Secure Global Desktop

Naturally these discussions were helpful and we made demonstrable improvement, but the progress was simply not quick enough for our senior management and teaching staff who were adamant that the service had to be first-class for our students.”

Hartlepool decided to look for a new IT and support partner and were recommended Cutter Project, one of the UK's leading suppliers of thin client, remote access and virtualised desktop computing solutions.

### “Cutter were honest and knowledgeable”

“Cutter carried out a detailed health check on the full system and the diagnostic expertise highlighted a number of specific faults at various levels,” explained Gerald. “They were very detailed and knowledgeable.”

The College IT team sat down with Cutter and looked at the options. There was a feasible suggestion from Oracle which involved upgrading some of the existing equipment with new, more powerful hardware. This was a lease arrangement that would have resulted in the desired improvement, but would concurrently have increased the annual expenditure to a point that would limit progress in other aspects of the College's IT Development Plan - such as the planned expansion of agile technology. The alternative was to look at a new hardware supplier.

## Hartlepool College

Six years and £53 million in the making, the new Hartlepool College stands on the site of the original campus in the heart of the town. More spacious, brighter, greener and more advanced than the previous building, the new College had been designed with a huge amount of input from its students, staff, industry and business partners to provide the very best resources for education, training, business and lifestyle.

But although the College was delighted with its new building, the forward thinking IT infrastructure was causing some notable concern in the early months of opening. The College was an early adopter of an Oracle Virtualised IT environment using Sun-Ray (zero) clients for approximately 750 desktops, to be used by staff and students.

### “Slow system was putting off students”

“While much of the system was performing superbly, the virtualised aspect was resulting in disappointing performance for staff and students and consequently the team spent a disproportionate amount of time in diagnostic and unplanned maintenance,” said Gerald Nicholson, Network Manager.

“The facilities team spent a significant amount of time with the suppliers, design and support contractors as the system performance was never quite got what we were expecting from the original specification.

## Delivering Real Benefits

### “Cost savings and a simplified solution”

“With the help of Cutter, we chose to go with Dell and struck a deal to renew the equipment under a 5 year lease resulting in a much more financially sustainable agreement at approximately £18,000 a year,” said Gerald. “We simplified our system – moving from 9 servers and 9 Storage Area Networks (SANS) – down to 6 servers and 0 SANS and performance has improved massively.”

“With Cutter’s assistance we are saving money on a year-on-year basis and installed an entirely new system with performance that is now fully fit-for-purpose.”

Gerald explained that it took just a couple of weeks for Cutter to install the new system and staff and pupils were able to carry on working during this period because there was no real downtime.

“People noticed the difference immediately. We have gone from around 50 helpdesk calls a day, down to just one or two a day. One minute it felt that we were constantly in the eye of the storm, in these early stages of the upgrade we are now very much under blue sky.”

## The Future

### “Future looks bright”

As well as adding smart card readers to each Dell desktop for secure authentication, Cutter also recommended using some of the redundant Oracle servers to deploy Oracle Secure Global Desktop, which allows staff and students at two other College campuses to access their virtual desktops via the Internet. This will be extended to staff and students to access their virtual desktops from home. The solution will be rolled-out from September 2013. “This has already worked out well for us in testing – we had a senior programmer who could not drive into work due to a sporting accident and she was able to dial-in using the new set-up. This prevented a potential headache for the MIS team at the College,” added Gerald.

Gerald concluded: “Cutter have been absolutely fantastic. We now have an IT system that now matches our wonderful new college. I would not have any hesitation in recommending Cutter’s services to other organisations in need of specialist support in this area.”

For more information contact Cutter at:

E: [info@cutterproject.co.uk](mailto:info@cutterproject.co.uk)  
T: +44 (0) 203 151 0196

© Cutter Project Limited 2013

Registered Office:  
18 Lynn Road  
Ely  
Cambridgeshire  
CB61 DA