



CASE STUDY

SMS Server

PROFILE



Industry
Education

Founded
1893

Website
www.writtle.ac.uk

Category
B2C

Customer Since
2006

PROJECT

Objective

Wanted to simplify inbound student absence notification and have the ability to create a 'one size fits all' outbound messaging portal, with full logging capabilities.

Solution

Integrated SMS Server with its existing email server on Microsoft Exchange, allowing 2-way SMS messages through M:Science's secure portal.



Business Impact

Vastly improved accessibility to, and accuracy of, student absence notification. This has decreased administrative fees by reducing the man hours spent making calls.

Writtle College reduces admin costs and improves communication with SMS Server

Established in 1893, Writtle College is a partner of Essex University, specialising in land-based industries and organisations. Students can study to complete Higher National Diplomas, Foundation Degrees, Honours Degrees, Masters and PhD qualifications. The College, situated two miles from Chelmsford, has a multi-national, cosmopolitan community, welcoming students from over fifty different nations.

Writtle College offers students cutting edge resources, with regular investments in learning and support facilities. Recent developments include a new lecture theatre, which can also be used as a conference and exhibition centre, and the provision of IT services for students, including a 30% increase in student computers.

The Challenge

With a vast understanding of the importance of investing in IT applications, Writtle College explored the possibilities of using SMS (text messaging) as a communication tool. The two main incentives for the college to implement an SMS solution were to simplify inbound student absence notification and have the ability to create a 'one size fits all' outbound messaging portal, with full logging capabilities.

The Solution

After evaluating possible SMS solutions on internet search engines a Lead Developer Analyst for Writtle College selected M:Science to implement SMS Server. SMS Server can be integrated with the college's existing mail server, in this case Microsoft Exchange, and allows the college to send 2-way SMS messages through M:Science's secure portal.

"I was impressed with the initial test package from M:Science, which allowed me to fully evaluate SMS Server. The product was impressive as the interface was simple and transparent, showing me the potential to build a customised system to manage the college's messages. I was also able to test the level of integration needed before committing to an SMS provider, which really helped me to make an informed decision."

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The Results

With the ability to create a tailor-made system to fit the college's requirements, Writtle College has enjoyed several benefits from SMS Server. The first of these comes from the vastly improved accessibility to, and accuracy of, student absence notification. This has decreased administrative fees by reducing the number of calls being made and man hours spent on monitoring pupils' attendance.

"The product is very robust and provides us with exactly the level of integration that we want, with the potential to expand its use as needed."

The college has an in-house tool which determines which messages need to be sent from the database. The tool then composes the message and sends it to Exchange, which then sends the text. SMS Server is able to integrate into Exchange, meaning that sending and receiving messages couldn't be easier from the existing system.

Phil Smith, Managing Director of M:Science, observes: "SMS is an ideal tool for colleges to use to communicate with students. By distributing information to mobile phones, last minute notifications can be sent and received with minimal effort, regardless of the student's location. The ease of expanding SMS Server's usage also means that this is a highly cost-effective solution, which is important when tied to a budget.

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Future Plans

The ability to add messaging to almost any application as a web-based bolt-on means that any extensions to the availability of the service are easy to produce and implement. Writtle College already has numerous plans to expand the use of SMS Server in the future.

"Extending the use of the messaging portal at Writtle could not be simpler, meaning we can quickly set up new functions as and when the need arises."



www.m-science.com

Address: 2 Nuffield Road,
Nuffield Industrial Estate,
Poole, Dorset, BH17 0RB

Tel: 01202 241120

Email: enquiries@m-science.com