



Microsoft Live@edu Customer Solution Case Study



Customer: St. John's University
Web Site: www.stjohns.edu
Customer Size: 1,500 employees
Country or Region: United States
Industry: Education
Partner: IMPACT Management

Customer Profile

St. John's University is a Catholic university known for its distinguished academic programs and student diversity. Based in New York, it has more than 20,000 students at five campus locations, including Rome, Italy.

Software and Services

- Services
 - Microsoft Live@edu
 - Exchange Labs
- Microsoft Office
 - Microsoft Office Outlook 2003
 - Microsoft Office Outlook Web Access
- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
 - Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 Enterprise Edition

For more information about other Microsoft customer successes, please visit: www.microsoft.com/casestudies

University Uses Hosted Collaboration Solution to Enhance Learning, Build Community

“Live@edu helps students share and collaborate on a global level. St. John's is committed to providing the digital resources necessary for student success.”

Maura Woods, Executive Director of Information Technology, St. John's University

St. John's University wanted to implement a communication and collaboration system capable of meeting the needs of its students' digital lifestyles. The University replaced its Unix-based e-mail solution for students with Microsoft® Live@edu. Through this free, hosted service, students get the e-mail, storage, messaging, and collaboration tools they expect, and St. John's advances its goal of strengthening its global academic community.

Business Needs

Founded in 1870, St. John's University is a Catholic Vincentian institution with four campuses in New York State; one in Rome, Italy; and satellite sites in Spain, France, and Ireland. With more than 20,000 students worldwide and a faculty of nearly 1,000, St. John's strives for “global engagement” among its academic community.

In 2001, the University implemented an on-premises e-mail solution for students. “We had since outgrown this system,” says Gary Young, Associate Director of Academic Technology and Faculty Support at St. John's University. “It lacked popular functionality like HTML-based message capabilities.” The

University also struggled to keep up with students' growing storage needs. Students quickly reached the 50-megabyte (MB) allocation for e-mail storage simply by exchanging messages with large attached files.

However, St. John's needed a student e-mail solution that could gracefully integrate with its academic student portal system, the Luminis Platform from SunGuard Higher Education, which serves as an access hub to a variety of campus services and resources. But e-mail integration was just one aspect of a greater challenge. “Students didn't have easy access to information,” says Maura Woods, Executive Director of Information

Technology at St. John's University. "To access a document in a shared folder, a student needed to be on campus to connect to the University network."

In early 2008, the University charged the IT department with identifying emerging technologies that could help create a more engaging, collaborative academic community. Joe Tufano, Chief Information Officer at St. John's University says, "Our vision is to become a leading provider of academically enriching technology to students and faculty."

Solution

After evaluating other solutions, St. John's chose Microsoft® Live@edu, a set of hosted communication and collaboration services for students. "The functionality we saw in other solutions wasn't where we wanted it to be," says Young. Further, St. John's wanted to capitalize on its existing investments in other Microsoft technologies. For instance, since 2003, the University had been issuing portable computers, complete with the Microsoft Office suite of productivity applications, to new students. "Students were used to the Microsoft Office environment," says Young.

Also, faculty and staff rely on Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 e-mail messaging and collaboration software, which is accessed through the Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003 messaging and collaboration client and Microsoft Office Outlook Web Access. Exchange Labs, available with Live@edu, is based on Microsoft Exchange Server and provides a professional e-mail experience with enhanced security capabilities. Says Woods, "Exchange Labs makes the student and faculty experiences more parallel. The look and feel are very similar to Outlook and Outlook Web Access." Students are also able

to keep their current @stjohns.edu e-mail addresses.

Finally, through a joint effort involving Microsoft Services and Microsoft Gold Certified Partner IMPACT Management, Woods's team integrated the Live@edu offering with Luminis in less than one week. IMPACT Management developed the Java-based code that connects the Unix-based Luminis environment to the Windows®-based Live@edu environment. Says Young, "It was critical that we create a seamless, single sign-on (SSO) experience." Once students sign in to the Luminis environment, they access their Exchange Labs e-mail from a button in their Web browser—no additional sign in required. The University is currently piloting the new e-mail solution to a select group of students and plans to deploy it to more than 20,000 students by the end of 2008. St. John's will then begin to deliver other Live@edu functionality—including Windows Live™ SkyDrive™ storage and Windows Live Spaces—which will also be available through SSO in the Luminis portal.

Benefits

With its new solution, St. John's University has met students' technology expectations, simplified administration, answered growing storage needs, and strengthened the academic environment with accessible communication and collaboration tools.

Meeting a new generation's expectations.

Live@edu helps Woods's team provide technologies that enable global student engagement. "This is the millennial student," says Woods. "This is our social networking generation. Most student communication is electronic, and Live@edu helps students share and collaborate on a global level. St. John's is committed to providing the digital resources necessary for student success."

Simplifying IT administration. Live@edu helps standardize information sharing at the University. "We used to have eight different ways that faculty could share documents with students—and each had its own limitations," says Young. St. John's plans to deliver collaboration components of Live@edu to faculty as well so that faculty and students will have access to the same tools, which will not only help with information sharing but will also help simplify IT administration. Young explains, "Live@edu helps us standardize the way we share information, cut down on confusion, and eliminate bottlenecks. Exchange Labs also simplifies security by providing end-to-end message encryption."

Reducing storage costs. Exchange Labs provides students with an ample 10-gigabyte (GB) e-mail storage quota, compared to the University's former quota of 50 MB. And Windows Live SkyDrive will offer 5 GB of storage for students' personal files. "When we first started down this path, we worried that providing a full collaboration portfolio was going to mean higher data storage and maintenance costs," says Young. "By moving all of this into the cloud with Live@edu, we don't have to budget for those storage costs."

Strengthening academic community.

Because the former e-mail solution did not meet expectations, some students subscribed to commercially available e-mail services. "We were losing students to other hosted services," says Woods. "Students go out and find what they need. Live@edu gives us what we need to bring students back and create a more collaborative, consistent, community-oriented environment."