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CONNECTING BUSINESS TO THE CLOUD

mic Montessori International College

Google Education

From small fry to big fish: How one small college shrugged off the past and embraced technology.

Montessori International College (MIC) is an intimate community of just 360 children, aged 3-18 years, and 55 dedicated staff. Based on principles of innovation, freedom and flexibility of learning, the college was eager to bring their technology strategy up to speed to benefit their whole community.

Challenge

Business Manager Grant Vayro was well aware of how behind MIC was in the world of technology, and the issues that was causing for staff, students and parents. “As a small, independent school, we had a lack of resources, very limited technology and no-one on staff who had a specific skill-set around technology. We were just stumbling along.” he said. The greatest challenges for Grant and the team at MIC were a lack of collaboration, low access to devices and any expertise that could both efficiently trouble-shoot in the moment, or suggest better ways to structure day-to-day operations. “We knew we had to up our approach towards technology and how it works within the college environment.”

> “Having a technician on site twice a week has given a presence and a face to technology. Previously I was doing that role. There was a lot of trial and error – well, more error.”
>
> **Grant Vayro,**
> Business Manager, MIC

Solution

Although from a logistics point of view MIC knew they wanted to move from an onsite-server to a cloud-based system, the ultimate aim was to create an environment where students and staff could work together. “Rather than a bunch of kids running around with USB sticks, we wanted our teaching staff and students to be able to work collaboratively,” says Grant, who brought IT partners Geeks on Tap (GoT) on board four years ago.

Improving connectivity with Google for Education

“Connectivity was vital, which was something that we could achieve with Google for Education. We were very behind other schools on that. When we approached Geeks on Tap, we were really seeking guidance – we didn’t know what we didn’t know. Steve at Geeks on Tap presented really confidently. His approach was ‘what was the issue, what are you looking for, and how do we make that happen?’ From the start, it’s been a very collaborative relationship and a two-way street, where they helped push us in a certain direction, and we pushed back on them to find solutions.”

Google for Education
Partner

Embracing technology - one step at a time

Solution deep dive

Taking a 'one step at a time' approach, MIC had multiple issues to solve in the roll-out of Google for Education products across their campus. Because of the vast age ranges of students, and therefore different approaches to learning environments and processes, educators needed to discover how the new platform could work in their specific class space.

From an outdated to an elevated learning environment

In addition, staff also needed to learn a whole new system, after being entrenched in one that, while they were comfortable with it, was no longer meeting their or their students' needs. "We wanted to move towards an environment that didn't require us to be "held" on site, a cloud-based approach so we didn't have to manage the server hardware ourselves," says Grant. "We needed a good pipeline, so we could increase bandwidth and connectivity. There were bumps, but it became obvious quite early on that it would change the way we worked."

What they wanted

More than anything, MIC wanted some expert help in deciding what systems, devices and platforms would bring them up-to-date and better able to control their environment. Prior to engaging GoT, the daily operations at MIC were causing inefficiencies in the classroom and beyond. "Internally, we wanted to reflect on our own performance. Rather than coming across something that wasn't working well and just accepting it, we wanted to know how to change it."

What they did

- An initial roll-out of Chromebooks, Chrome Education Upgrade and Google Workspace for Education Fundamentals campus-wide
- Transferred outdated files and systems onto Google Classroom, Drives and Sheets so they were accessible
- Ran information and training sessions to increase efficacy among staff and ensure a smooth transition
- Replaced old devices with Chromebooks and increased the number of devices across all grades and age groups, including incorporating a 'bring your own device' (BYOD) function for senior students
- Ensured a fully-functioning at-home learning package for all students, including the younger age groups who traditionally used technology less in the classroom

What they achieved

- A complete overhaul of day-to-day operations, including how files are created, accessed, shared and saved
- A move away from unstable, easily-lost USB sticks and files that could be deleted or changed by anyone with access to a device
- A significant increase in the number of devices across campus
- An increase in BYOD options for older students
- A highly collaborative, progressive and modern learning environment that has benefited all students. staff and families in the MIC community

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Partner

Key Benefits

Over the past four years, Montessori International College has not only completely transformed the way their campus operates, but has utilised technology to benefit their teaching and learning outcomes. Now, looking to the future, they are working with Geeks on Tap to ensure greater cybersecurity and a safer learning environment for their students.

1

400% increase in devices

MIC's students were sharing just 30 PCs before the college transitioned to Google for Education. Now, 150 Chromebooks are available for students to use across 11 year levels as needed. "Previously, we might have had three PCs in a classroom," says Grant. "If a student couldn't access the right PC, they'd need a USB stick with their work filed there. So their work could easily be deleted. Chromebooks were seen as a stable, reliable mobile option."

2

Improved overall efficiency

Investing in their IT structure has allowed MIC to streamline processes and operations for the benefit of all. "While enabling students to work on a document that isn't stuck to one PC has allowed for greater collaboration in the classroom, Google has worked on the business side of things," says Grant. "Converting over to Google Workspace for Education Fundamentals has meant we could achieve some of the security tracking and protocols we were missing."

3

High success in creating a learning-from-home offering

When MIC needed to move to learning at-home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they exceeded all student and staff expectations. Live check-ins, live lessons in real-time and, for the younger students, small reading groups, allowed the children to still learn together. "It was nice to be ahead of the game." said Grant.

4

Increase in staff IT skills and fluency

Having grown up with a system that was familiar, but unreliable, the team at MIC worked hard to achieve a high level of technology knowledge. "Kids are far more fluent in tech than we are, so there was a high level of expectation from students," says Grant. "Google has really changed the way we approach things and opened up opportunities."

Get in touch

Contact Geeks on Tap on 1300 885 489 to find out how Google for Education can help you achieve your teaching and learning goals.

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