

RM Kaleidos Learning Platform Delivers on School Learning Vision For John Septimus Roe

When John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School wanted to extend its education and school management into the digital realm, the RM Kaleidos Learning Platform provided the solution.



Teachers are now beginning to develop digital course content and have learned how to set, mark and record student progress online. Parents will be able to use the school portal to get access to their children's results or for news on school events, and students will begin to use online spaces to collaborate with classmates.

Requirements

- **Students to be able to access course material and collaborate with other students online**
- **Broaden the education experience and ensure that parents are fully engaged.**

Solution

- **The school deployed the RM Kaleidos Learning Platform**

Benefits

- **Improved parent access to school data**
- **Extended engagement with students**
- **Increased access to teaching and learning resources**
- **Teachers are developing digital course content**
- **Teachers have learned how to set, mark and record student progress online**
- **Parents will be able to access their children's results or news on school events via the portal**
- **Students will be able to use online spaces to collaborate with classmates.**

John Septimus Roe is an Anglican community school in Western Australia. As an independent school run under the auspices of the Anglican School Commission, John Septimus Roe is tasked with providing education in the Anglican tradition, accessible to children from a diverse range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

The school comprises approximately 130 teachers and 2,000 children, aged from kindergarten to Year 12. Run by a school council that includes church, parent and community representatives, the school places a special emphasis on students' engagement with the community.

Most of the school's students either use, or have access to, laptop computers. This encouraged the school to think about how to foster students' relationships in the online space.

Although the school had a variety of administration and information systems, it lacked the means of providing access to students and parents, and it didn't have any platform for helping students and teachers collaborate online.

"We had a staff and student intranet for providing policy documents, calendars and reporting schedules, but it was not interactive," says Deputy Principal, David Hill.

"In addition, there was a management information system for school information, contact information, billing and timetables."

What John Septimus Roe wanted was to be able to put calendar information in the same place as all school communication to help parents use online media to engage with the school and students' progress, and to exploit the potential for online technologies to enhance the way students interact with each other, teachers and educational resources.

"All schools are looking at ways in which they can embrace technology to help the fundamental purpose of schools, which is education. What we were hoping for was something that young people could engage with from kindergarten upwards."

"Our focus was very much on getting information to flow electronically because then our communication and teaching can help build the relationships that will keep the whole community engaged."

The school was using RM's Maze School Management System and had approached us to review how they were using it and to talk about developing a portal to improve how information was disseminated outside the school.

The RM Kaleidos Learning Platform, an integrated education database, portal and course management platform proved the ideal solution. RM had recently won a government tender in Scotland to provide the world's first country-wide learning platform, benefiting over 750,000 pupils, and this had been the basis for the development of the RM Kaleidos Learning Platform.

Continued over...



RM Kaleidos Learning Platform Delivers on School Learning Vision at John Septimus Roe

The portal, based on Microsoft Office SharePoint Server, provides remote access to information and resources, together with communication and collaboration tools. There is also an integrated Virtual Learning Environment that helps teachers to create and deliver media-rich courses and assignments.

"The solution provides robust data exchange, allowing data from the existing Maze database to be integrated with other applications through the portal, so that external stakeholders can gain access to information. Finally, there is an assessment module that helps teachers to record students' goals, targets and progress and analyse this data."

"When we saw the Kaleidos product, we realised the potential," says David. "The principal was very interested in piloting this technology in Australia."

RM delivers the service from a Tier 3 Data Centre in Western Australia, ensuring high levels of availability and security. This allows school staff to enjoy the benefits the solution provides whilst freeing them of the complexities of building and maintaining the supporting IT systems.

At the end of October 2008, 32 heads of department were given an overview session of the platform, and starting in 2009, teachers began to assemble digital course content in the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). In addition, the school began to set up a series of school and department 'Interest Spaces'. Configured as interactive web pages, Interest Spaces can host a variety of web parts including photos, surveys, news items and discussions, and be used to broadcast information to parents and maintain numerous school calendars.

Benefits

The RM Kaleidos Learning Platform implementation will enable John Septimus Roe to fulfill its mission by cultivating education and engagement with students in the online space. They can interact with rich media course material and teachers can develop and store large repositories of sophisticated course content. Meanwhile, parents can gain access to school assessments and scheduling, giving them the chance to be far more involved with their own children's performance and the school in general.

Taking the media to Gen Y

The RM Kaleidos Learning Platform will change the way students work, enabling them to produce more sophisticated project material and build up their own portfolio of work which can be shared with others.

"This will become a motivating tool for students," says David. "They can work in their familiar media, which is also safe and protected."

"For group work, the students can collaborate on different components of the same project. Plus we can create self-marking tests electronically. Or if a student is absent for a protracted period, the teacher can keep them up to date with what has been covered in class."

Course restructuring

Recreating or supplementing existing courses in an online format has required some additional effort, but teachers stand to recoup the investment as the subsequent repeat of each course requires minor modification or enhancement. In the meantime, the platform can be used to aggregate and track individual and group performance.

"Teachers are always looking to improve the efficiency of their workload, and in the long term, this will help them to be much more effective," says David. "Once the core material is established electronically in the VLE, it will be much easier for them to make modifications, edits or improvements."

"But the exciting thing will be how relationships between students and teachers develop. Some online lessons will be interactive and we will use it heavily for homework – to send it out, assess it and provide feedback. Students can build up their own electronic portfolios and teachers can encourage them to compare their own work with their fellow students and learn from them."

Broader engagement

The capability of making a large proportion of school activities and administration available online will help John Septimus Roe bring parents closer to the school and all aspects of education.

"I see that education is about parents being involved – seeing what we are doing and why we are doing it," says David. "They will be able to see how their sons and daughters are progressing, because they have access to individual marks and school-wide data."

"This is important because of the lifestyles that most parents lead. Whilst they can still ring up the school or make an appointment to get information, there will be the opportunity to source information online. The platform will be their main communication avenue and they will be able to access what they want at the time they need it."

The school believes that its integrated online Kaleidos Learning Platform will help students develop the positive and productive relationships they will need to prosper.

"Relationships are about talking to people," says David. "Whilst sitting down face-to-face will always be an important way in which we build relationships, online spaces are the medium of now and the future. So we have to build school communications around this medium."

"Similarly, there will always be a place and role for the classroom teacher in the teaching and learning process, but we have to recognise that the young people of today have embraced online technology as a way of absorbing information. My sense is that they will drive this more than we will."

For further information:

phone: 1800 816 454

email: sales@rmap.com.au

or visit: www.rmap.com.au

