

“Having EduNet at Orewa College means that we can have more than 2000 devices accessing the Internet at the same time. The digital program is growing continuously with BYOD for Years 8, 9 and 10 made compulsory in 2013”

– Mark Quigley, Associate Principal

Orewa College and EduNet – Two Years On



Orewa College is a large co-ed secondary school in the northern suburbs of Auckland. In 2012 they became the first school in New Zealand to make digital devices (e.g. tablets such as iPads) compulsory for all Year Nine students.

However, before they could make full-scale digital learning a reality, they had to put the proper infrastructure in place. Orewa College partnered with Isometric Solutions to put together a cutting-edge communications network powered by Vector Communications’ EduNet product. EduNet provides teachers and students with an ultra-fast and reliable connection to educational resources, the internet and other EduNet-connected schools.

In this new digital environment, teachers are able to achieve more during lessons, while students are more engaged in learning. And for the school, unmetered access at a fixed cost means there are no unpleasant surprises or budget overruns.



The challenge

To provide a solution that can support a teaching system focused on digital learning, where hundreds of users are connected simultaneously. With hundreds more new students joining the digital curriculum each year, the solution must also be easily scalable and the costs have to be controllable.

The need

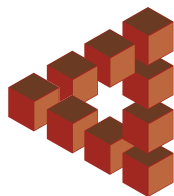
With the introduction of digital devices for all Year 8, 9 and 10 students, (and a large number of seniors also bringing a device), the use of tablets such as iPads has replaced pen and paper. Online resources are now an integral part of the teaching process and instead of students all sourcing information from the same book, they’re doing their own research online. With such a high degree of digital learning (about 2000 devices accessing the internet at any one time), if the school’s connection were to slow down, or go down, almost every year 8, 9 and 10 class as well as many senior students would be disrupted. Orewa College needs a fast and reliable connection so that both students and teachers can keep working throughout the day.

“Orewa delivers and receives Virtual Learning through video conference around New Zealand. We have made it compulsory for our students to have an Internet capable one-to-one device. There is no way we could have accomplished this without Vector’s EduNet. UFB, one-to-one devices and wireless will transform education.”

Mark Quigley, Associate Principal

“Video will become the new pen. This is bandwidth greedy, especially on a large secondary school scale, so Internet speed will become an issue and limit learning if not managed well.”

Mark Quigley, Associate Principal



Isometric Solutions
a different perspective

Solution

EduNet provides Orewa College with:

- Ultra fast 1 Gbit/s connection with other EduNet schools for instant collaboration.
- 100 Mbit/s access to rich content from a wide variety of educational content.
- 50 Mbit/s access to the public internet – reviewed regularly to ensure this meets the particular requirements of the school and without caps that would hamper learning in the classroom.

Key results

The enhanced learning experience for Orewa College students is possible because teachers and students now have immediate connection to ultra-fast broadband and unlimited use. This ease of access is provided at a fixed cost so there's no financial pressure on the school to restrict digital learning. According to the teachers, Orewa College's Year Nine students are more engaged in learning. Being a part of the digital generation (aka iGeneration), the move to digital entirely suits their way of learning. As one teacher remarked, “It puts more of the learning in their hands – gives them more ownership of it”. Rather than copying notes from the whiteboard like they used to, students can now take in what the teacher is saying and then take a photo of the notes at the end. Researching online is also more productive and engaging for the students, and the teacher can spend more time mingling and helping individuals and groups find and understand information.

The EduNet solution for Orewa College was implemented in 2011. Two years on, there are around 2000 devices accessing the Internet at the school. The uptake of the digital learning process has been widespread and is reflected in the data usage which is now sitting at about 2.5Tb a month, a significant increase from when they started. The school has implemented a responsible use policy to help students manage and track their usage as the need for internet access increases.

Why Vector Communications?

Isometric Solutions, Orewa College's IT partner, recommended Vector's EduNet product because it was the fastest solution available, is completely uncapped and available for a fixed cost. So, EduNet provides absolute certainty on what the bill is going to be each month, and a very fast internet service. What's more, being an open access network means everyone can put up relevant content to be accessed on EduNet.