



Mercy Catholic College rolls out groundbreaking technology program for students

Acer Computer Australia was instrumental in this Perth Catholic school's plan to give students an always-on, reliable technology solution.



As Mercy College director of ICT Ms Donna Bird articulates it, "The vision for Mercy College was to have a sustainable program that enabled all students access to a computer at home and at school whenever they need it. We just weren't able to keep up with demand for computer access through traditional means like computer laboratories and trolleys of notebooks for student use. For the students to be able to do their homework, they needed access to computers with the same software configuration as the systems at school."

Based in the northern Perth suburb of Koondoola, Mercy College has a strong mission to create a climate where students can develop a love of learning. Realising that, meant access to the technology students would rely on in their careers and personal lives beyond school, the College launched a revolutionary program to put computers into the hands of all their students.





Capitalising on an established relationship with Acer's Perth-based Business Development Manager Julia Sinton and Acer Authorised Partner BizQuip Solutions, Mercy College designed a cost effective solution to give each student a netbook on a staggered schedule across the school grades. After a rewarding history sourcing technology from servers to notebooks and desktops from BizQuip Solutions over many years, Mercy College was able to implement a solution the students embraced enthusiastically but kept an eye on a very tight bottom line.



The answer was the Acer Aspire 1830T – a versatile, mobile, light weight netbook computer with a long-life battery and powerful Intel® Core-i3 processor that's perfect for the movement, activity and work day demands of students in a school environment. It was part of a purchase of tablet and Travelmate notebooks for teaching staff and Acer L670 ultra small PCs for classrooms, but it's the TM1830T that's proven a hit with the students.



After seeking for tenders from three providers, Ms Bird explains why Acer's solution made the most sense, and not just because of the supplier relationships the school had always enjoyed. "It was about the price point, the size and weight of the system, the battery life and the warranty and insurance support," she says, "but most importantly it was about consistency with our existing infrastructure. There haven't been any big system roadblocks throughout the deployment."



Even so, Ms Bird and her team had quite an undertaking ahead of them. The initial rollout of netbooks covered 220 senior students, but the whole program is designed to put a system (ready for day-to-day use) in the hands of every student in the school. The plan is on track, with systems being deployed to more year groups throughout 2011. By November years nine through to eleven will also be covered, a grand total of 500 students across the entire student body.

Of course, with the rough and tumble of an average school day – not to mention the treatment each system probably receives at home – reliable after-sales service and support was a crucial component of the provision. “We offer an ongoing and high level of IT support to the school, including design and implementation, so the options vary for each class of system,” says BizQuip’s Evan Papantoniou, “Based on the various models in the Mercy College fleet, warranty options include on-site parts and labour, swap and go and pickup and return warranties.” As Donna Bird adds, “BizQuip has always been very supportive of Mercy’s need for after sales service.”

Mercy College is looking to the future. While tablets sweep the consumer world, the school is keeping its energies focused on Acer netbooks because of the price point and battery life that allows the students to get through a whole school day on only one charge – a critical factor in both mobility and convenience. Ms Bird praises the company’s



competitive pricing and the ruggedness and reliability of the 1830T. “While Acer is making the notebooks at a competitive price and at a suitable quality, we’ll continue to use them as we expand our fleet to more students,” she says.

(About Mercy College)

Mercy College is a coeducational Catholic school covering the years from kindergarten to Year 12. The College was established by the Sisters of Mercy in 1972 and currently has an enrolment of over 1600 students. The College’s aim is to offer a Christian education providing for the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional and social needs of students. The school motto, Love in Action, is based on the philosophy of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy, who travelled to Australia from Ireland to establish Mercy convents, colleges and community facilities.

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