



## Case Study

Bridgwater College deploy IGEL thin clients for management ease.

Business Solutions from  
IGEL Technology





# Bridgwater College.

Bridgwater College, in the west of Somerset, is one of the top performing colleges in England. As a result of a recent merger with a land-based college, it now offers one of the broadest curriculums in the country. The College provides programmes of study for 14-year-olds right through to university level courses. It also has a growing number of international students and works in partnership with business to improve workforce skills. The College has centres in Cannington, Cheddar, Minehead, Yeovil and Paignton catering for approximately 20,000 full and part-time students annually.

## A thin client pioneer looking to upgrade

Bridgwater College has a reputation for pioneering technology use in the educational sector. The college first adopted server-based computing in 1999 and today has 2,500 desktops, the majority of which are thin clients, across nine sites. So when the college decided to upgrade its thin clients last year, IT Manager Dave Foster undertook a major review of the potential products on the market.

## Management software and USB compatibility were key factors

"We are experienced thin client users and knew what was important to us," said Dave. "The management software for the thin clients was essential in the buying decision. It is the key to effective management."

Dave and his team evaluated all the major thin client providers, including Wyse Technology, but quickly settled on IGEL and its Remote Manager software. "The management software with many of the devices had developed since we last evaluated the market but the IGEL software best met our requirements," said Dave. "It does exactly what we want it to with a no nonsense approach. We can create different user profiles, house them centrally and then manage and upgrade units at all our different locations."

## The customer

- one of England's top performing colleges
- 20,000 full and part time students
- 2,500 desktops at 9 sites

Another key consideration for Bridgwater was the thin client support for USB devices and memory sticks. With the variety of students we have at the college, it is essential that students can take home and bring in documents electronically," explained Dave. "Memory stick use is encouraged and we have CD and floppy disk drives in the classrooms which can also be plugged into the USB connection of the thin client."

Bridgwater chose the IGEL-2100 Linux model with 2 USB ports to run on its Microsoft® Terminal Services powered server-based computing infrastructure with a load balancing gateway controlling access to the server farm. The college worked with long-term partner Thinstore International to secure the IGEL units. To date the college has acquired 250 plus units and is transitioning all its thin clients to IGEL over time.



“Working with Thinstore gives us access to a wide range of friendly and knowledgeable IT professionals, who can respond rapidly to requests for assistance. They do this either over the phone, by remote access to our network or by on-site and in person technical consultancy,” said Dave.

Paul Robinson, at Thinstore, commented: “We are committed to server-based computing in the education sector because it provides students with the most effective access to computing resources. Add to this the ease of deployment, reduced maintenance and on-going support costs, security and long-term durability of the devices and it makes server-based computing the only truly, cost effective solution available today.”

**Amazed that all educational establishments don't use it**  
With many years of experience and having seen Bridgwater College develop from just 80 PCs to 2,500 desktops, Dave says he is amazed that more educational establishments have not adopted thin clients.

“I don't see the use in education that I would have expected,” said Dave. “We know we have saved many thousands of pounds each year and are able to manage our network, rollout and react to issues so much faster than others. Our students and staff now prefer to use the thin client because it is faster than the PC and with a centrally managed rack of servers we can maintain our infrastructure proactively without downtime, rather than waiting for a PC to go wrong.”



#### The solution

- Microsoft® Terminal Services
- IGEL-2100 LX Smart

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