

MERLIN IMPROVES STUDENT AND STAFF ACCESS TO INFORMATION, SERVICES AND APPLICATIONS

SUMMARY

COMPANY

The Manitoba Education Research and Learning Information Network (MERLIN) promotes the use of technology to improve educational services.

CHALLENGE

The Manitoba Department of Education and MERLIN recognized a need for IT skills development tools to ensure success in school, the workforce and the community.

SOLUTION

Allstream developed CyberSchools Manitoba, offering a personalized, secure Web environment and a common platform for content sharing and aggregation.

OUTCOMES

The CyberSchools portal offered students, teachers and administrators safe and secure access to email and other online tools.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The Department and MERLIN recognized the need for higher value education and IT skills development. Specific drivers included:

- More efficient and secure student and staff access to email, calendaring and web/file storage

- Email system consistency and compatibility across schools and between students
- Equity of access between rural and urban schools
- Content sharing and aggregation with schools, partners, employees and suppliers

SOLUTION

MERLIN selected Allstream to provide Identity Management, messaging/calendaring and portal installation and configuration. Allstream's expertise in Content Management, Portal and IT Security was an ideal fit for MERLIN's requirements.

The education portal solution, the first of its kind in Canada, was targeted to more than 200,000 users, including students, teachers, administrators and school division staff. Based on Sun Microsystems' Sun One portal technology, the CyberSchools portal is a common Internet platform that provides the infrastructure needed to aggregate and share content – information, services and applications – with students, partners, employees and suppliers. Each user

received a personal email account, online calendar, network file storage and Web space.

Allstream provided expertise and services including:

- Business requirements gathering/change management
- Base product installs in the environment
- Application development, customization and integration
- End-to-end production environment testing
- Student portal solution documentation
- Pilot deployment assistance to cross-school divisional test users
- Mentoring and knowledge transfer to MERLIN IT staff

“Allstream was able to quickly understand our specific K-S4 requirements, which are quite different from a commercial environment, and deliver a portal solution well suited to our needs.”

Greg Baylis,
Chief Operation Officer,
MERLIN

BUSINESS OUTCOMES

With the introduction of the portal, Manitoba students received a safe and secure environment to develop their online skills in order to communicate quickly and conveniently.

In addition, the CyberSchools portal delivered on many of MERLIN's goals including:

- Student access to customized content, email, calendaring, web file storage, personal Web pages and management tools

- A centralized location for education information for all students across Manitoba
- Channel management and self-administration/maintenance tools for school and administration staff
- Expansion-ready content channels and services

ABOUT ALLSTREAM

Allstream is a leading communication solutions provider with a world-class portfolio of Connectivity, Managed Services and Professional Services. Focused on the business market, Allstream collaborates with customers to create tailored solutions that meet their unique needs and help them compete more effectively. Allstream is a division of Manitoba Telecom Services Inc. (MTS), with a team of dedicated employees focused on delivering outstanding value to its customers. MTS has an extensive broadband fibre-optic network spanning more than 24,300 kilometres, and provides international connections through strategic partnerships and interconnection agreements with other international service providers. MTS's shares are listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange (trading symbol: MBT). For more information, please visit: www.mts.ca and www.allstream.com.

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