

Case Study

Industry: Education

Cambridgeshire County Schools



The background.

Black Box Network Services was chosen to be part of a project to introduce regional broadband capabilities to the Cambridgeshire County Schools. This networking and cabling project, part of the "Connected Learning" Project, ensures students and teachers have reliable, fast access to on-line information, resources, and services.

Black Box was involved in Phase One of the project, which included installing "business-quality" integrated data networks in more than 50 schools. The networks were designed to provide the infrastructure for effective access to a new, regional broadband network.

The planning.

Black Box worked closely with the county council's project team in network design, installation scheduling, and post-installation site reviews. The planning was critical to allow for future growth, while setting the standard for future phases of the project.

Black Box consultant Graeme Woolly said, "In projects of this type, careful planning is required, as a large part of the work took place whilst the pupils and teachers were at school, so safety is a first priority."

The networks.

Black Box installed Local Area Networks (LANs) in 50 schools. The LANs consisted of fiber backbones with CAT5e horizontal cable. A number of wireless access points were also installed in some schools. These provided pupils and teachers with a flexible networking solution rather than being physically connected into the wired network infrastructure.

The future.

Future phases of the project include installing broadband connectivity and school networks in the remaining 200 Cambridgeshire schools. This will enable on-line learning, enhanced curriculum-based activities, and improved administrative/teaching processes.

Patrick Grange, the school's Networking and Cabling Project Manager, explains the project further. "Connected Learning is about ensuring pupils and teachers have reliable and fast access to on-line information, resources, and services for the benefit of learners of all ages within the local community. The school LANs will also be able to link into other regional and national networks, including JANET, the private, government-funded network for education and research."

"Black Box has competitively and effectively met our needs throughout the first phase of the project, and we've been very satisfied with the quality of the work."

Patrick Grange, Networking and Cabling Project Manager, Cambridgeshire County Schools