

Case study



Client: Addington High School
Sector: Education



Learn Anywhere from Syscap is helping pupils at Addington in and out of the classroom

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Rufus Sanders,
Addington High School

LearnAnywhere® 

Lifelong learning

Project Manager and teacher Rufus Sanders believes access to information through the Internet is now a right rather than a privilege, and that bridging the digital divide is one of the biggest challenges not just for the education system but for the UK as a whole. To begin tackling the issue within his own school, Sanders has developed an affordable laptop scheme – with help from Syscap, the UK's leading independent ICT finance provider.

Addington High School is a secondary comprehensive in the outskirts of London. With a catchment area that includes some of the most deprived areas of the capital, the school faces many challenges as it strives to deliver a robust education to every one of its 760 pupils. Despite this, the school has just successfully applied to become a specialist visual and media arts college and a dramatic rise in its GCSE pass rate has made it London's second most improved school. In addition, phase two of the New Addington OnLine project has just been completed, putting 123 affordable laptops into the hands of pupils and their families.

Starting up

With his background as an IT consultant on Wall Street, New York, Spanish, ICT and Media teacher Rufus Sanders was chosen to spearhead a new project to achieve greater access to IT for the school's pupils and their families. “New Addington OnLine (NAOL) has three aims,” he says. “To bridge the digital divide in an area of multiple deprivation, to provide best access to the best resources at the best cost, and to bring learning of all kinds to adults and kids in our area.”

Support for the scheme was already in place, but the technology and finance for it were not. “An ICT supplier had already been earmarked for the scheme, but I wasn't happy with their terms, particularly on the finance side,” recalls Sanders. “When I did my teacher training I remembered we had used Ergo computers, and thought they would offer just what we wanted in terms of performance, support and affordability. When we looked into it we discovered they had a solution for finance in place as well.”

There are a number of routes schools can pursue in order to help finance an affordable laptop scheme including: setting themselves up as a charity, paying for the laptops themselves or finding a suitable finance partner. Funding is also available from the e-Learning Foundation. “We decided to go with Ergo,” says Sanders, “whose finance partner Syscap was offering an out of the box finance package we could plug straight into. It was the obvious choice.”

Learn Anywhere

Like Sanders, Syscap has been dedicated to delivering equity of access to ICT in schools for many years. Already a leading finance provider to the education sector, Syscap launched its Learn Anywhere scheme in 2005 to help schools just like Addington to bridge the digital divide.

Syscap. Innovative finance solutions for education

The tailored Learn Anywhere solution delivered laptops to pupils easily and cost effectively.



The programme provides access to finance without many of the logistical and administrative barriers that can make other schemes so complicated to manage, enabling the introduction of laptops quickly and with a minimum of paperwork and delay.

Crucially, unlike other similar programmes, Learn Anywhere does not require upfront payment and schools are not restricted to a particular supplier. The length of any agreement can vary from two to four years, with payments structured to suit. Learn Anywhere also features a full range of insurance options, so schools can minimise the risks associated with damage, loss or shortfalls in parental contributions.

Low cost

Sanders set up a meeting between Ergo, Syscap and Addington High's Headteacher and Bursar. "Without Syscap we would never have got the go ahead from the Head," says Sanders. "Syscap provided all the facts, were very clear and open about how the finance would work, and since then they have continued to provide good, clear information whenever we have needed it."

The flexibility of Learn Anywhere is important at a school like Addington: "We've got a number of parents who for one reason or another can only offer payments in cash, and it's vital that they are

not alienated from the scheme," says Sanders. "Syscap have listened to our needs and delivered a finance plan to match. We've got the cost of access down to just £5 per week, which is at a level that most families can budget for."

Extended schools

In October 2006, Sanders launched the NAOL project, offering 62 laptops to children and their families. Phase two has just been completed, adding a further 61 computers to the project and phase three will see another 30 acquired by Christmas. The laptops come with a full range of educational software and Addington has even partnered with a local adult learning provider to ensure access to learning for any parent involved in the scheme.

Sanders carried out some research in February 2007 among those involved in the scheme from years seven to eleven, as well as their teachers and parents. 87 percent of participants reported being pleased or very pleased with the scheme, and in terms of laptop use at home there seemed to be a healthy balance being struck between work and leisure. "We expect people to use their laptops just like any other home computer," says Sanders. "Having access to IT and the Internet is about belonging to the information age and improving life chances as a result. It's not just about doing your homework."

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About Syscap

Syscap is the UK's leading independent IT finance provider. Syscap works directly with clients and in partnership with industry-leading IT vendors, equipment suppliers, ISVs and other business service providers. Through tailored, innovative finance solutions, Syscap enables commercial, professional and public sector organisations of all sizes to acquire the business assets and resources they need, without traditional budgetary constraints.

Founded in 1990, Syscap now employs over 110 people across the UK and Europe, has annual revenues in excess of £135 million and £300 million of assets under management.

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