



Thomas Telford School Case Study

"Our students are extremely successful because we made the right choice with Real."

Dave Berry

Deputy Head and Director of Online Learning Services

"RealMedia delivers the streaming bit rate we require with the video quality we demand."

Simon Carswell

Senior Digital Video Editor

"Real technology is essential to us for delivering online learning and for achieving our overall educational goals."

Dave Berry

Deputy Head and Director of Online Learning Services

Summary

Thomas Telford School (TTS) has developed a well respected and increasingly well known online curriculum. To achieve its goals of maximizing student performance and enabling independent learning, as well as to serve a growing national and international market, the school chose digital media technology from Real®.

Introduction

Established in 1991, Thomas Telford School is one of 15 schools within the City Technology College (CTC) program. Serving mostly inner city areas, this program is comprised of independent schools that are funded through a combination of private sector sponsorship and government grants.

Located in Telford, UK, TTS is one of the most innovative members of the CTC program. As stated in its mission, the school seeks to "maximize student performance in all its forms" and to "offer a broad curriculum which includes the National Curriculum with the opportunity of specializing in more Mathematics, Science, Technology and Business Education." To accomplish these and other goals, TTS embraced digital media technology from Real as a means to enhance student learning.

The Need

Thomas Telford School has the same basic goal of every other school: educating students. As part of the CTC program, however, TTS sought out innovative curricular approaches with the enlightened goal of educating its students by — according to Dave Berry, Deputy Head and Director of Online Learning Courses — "capturing their imagination and harnessing it in a way that motivates them to succeed."

To do so means more than creating great content, it involves engaging students, parents and teachers in ways never before possible. It means taking the school's already compelling content and offering it in a way that enables independent learning for all levels of students. It's about encouraging the students to become active participants in their education and helping them to become more self-reliant. As news of TTS's successes spread, the school also needed to find a reliable way to offer its content to a wider audience.

The Solution

Before TTS began using Real technology, they found the quality of video streaming over the Internet to be poor. Large file sizes, multiple bit rates and numerous formats also presented problems. "We wanted to partner with a company that had a reputation for quality products . . . whose technology could deliver exactly what we required," said Rob Cullen, IT Director. What TTS required was a reliable and flexible digital media technology that could deliver the school's content to its diverse client base of students both on and off campus as well as to other schools and programs. TTS turned to Real.

"We were a bit daunted at first by having to install a video streaming server," said Mr. Cullen, "but the Real product was out of the box and up and running in about 30 minutes." With digital media technology from Real, the school is able to deliver great picture quality at low bit rates and with extremely small file sizes.

For Justine Owen, a teacher at TTS, the simplicity and flexibility of Real technology means students are able to view on-demand lessons and classroom demonstrations, follow projects from start to finish and build self-reliance by moving at their own pace. Using RealPlayer® at home also allows students and parents to access the curriculum together, creating what Ms. Owen calls "a partnership between the school, the students and the parents."

Mission Accomplished

Real technology helps Thomas Telford School achieve its goal of not just educating students, but of encouraging independent learning at all levels, by sparking their imagination through innovative teaching methods, direct involvement of parents, interactive projects and more. Real technology delivers numerous advantages over competitive products including the ability to stream content at multiple bit rates and over multiple formats.

According to Mr. Cullen and Mr. Berry, Real gave TTS "a scalable product [that delivered] good value for money . . . a real quality to our content that's noticeable to our entire customer base." In addition, Real technology saves the school both time and money, and offers industry-leading technical support, which TTS considers to be essential to its success.

Today, Thomas Telford School has an expansive curriculum available online via RealAudio® and RealVideo®. The school also created Thomas Telford School Online Ltd. (TTSONline), a commercial entity that serves 1,000 schools (one-third of schools in the UK) who subscribe to its courses and resource materials under an annual license agreement. Real technology plays a critical role in the school's success with hundreds of other schools and possibly hundreds of thousands of children. As Mr. Berry sees it, "Our students are extremely successful because we made the right choice with Real . . . perhaps in the future we will see millions of children benefiting from this technology."

About Real

Real is the global leader in digital media delivery. Real develops and markets software products and services designed to enable users of personal computers and other consumer electronic devices to send and receive audio, video and other multimedia services using the Web.

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