

The Institution

Fakieh School is one of the leading schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with 80 employees and 500 students.

The Challenge

The school used multiple channels to connect with people storing information in the website. Staff found it difficult to update the Web site. Information was spread across several parts of the school, restricting collaboration among staff, students, & parents.

The Solution

Netways deployed document management, e-fax, and workflow automation systems from Captaris and an electronic library application. It also implemented a Learning Gateway framework, based on SharePoint to offer a complete e-learning portal for the school.

The Benefits

- Effective access to resources & people
- Streamlined processes & efficient administration – Less time on administration, more time on teaching
- Parent involvement in education of children

Leading Saudi School Connects Pupils, Staff, and Parents with E-Learning Portal

Overview

Fakieh School is a prestigious, rapidly growing school in Saudi Arabia. It wanted to improve communication and collaboration among its stakeholders and worked with Microsoft® Gold Partner Netways to develop the country's first complete online learning community. Students, staff, and parents have personalized online portals that offer a single point of access to key information. Paperless administration has also improved efficiency.

The Institution

Fakieh School is one of the leading schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Its 55 teachers and 25 other employees currently teach 500 students, but the school is rapidly growing—next academic year, the number of students is set to rise to 1,200, while teaching numbers will increase to 100.

Such expansion reflects the school's success and prestige, which it continually strives to uphold by ensuring high learning standards. To this end, Fakieh School wanted to move away from traditional teaching and learning models and implement a modern, flexible approach that reflects current educational best practices. This required two complementary shifts in approach: improving communication among students, parents, and staff and promoting better collaboration across the entire school environment.



The Challenge

Effective communication depends on keeping people well-informed with up-to-date information. The school used e-mail, SMS text messaging, fax, and instant messaging to keep in touch with people and had a Web site as a central information point. However, staff found it difficult to update the Web site without specialist HTML knowledge and user-friendly tools.

What is more, information was spread across several parts of the school, delaying and restricting collaboration among staff, students, and parents. There was concern that opportunities for improving learning were being lost—in particular, exchanging resources for lesson plans, setting and marking assignments, and keeping parents informed of their children's progress.

The Solution

Fakieh School wanted to implement the first complete e-learning community online in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region and offer students, parents, teachers, and administrators a unified, secure online workspace. It engaged Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Netways, which recommended taking the opportunity to implement a paperless learning environment.

Netways proposed a two-stage approach: develop a new infrastructure capable of realizing this aim and deploy an integrated, scalable solution to deliver a complete online learning framework.

The school infrastructure consisted of:

- A server powered by Windows Server® 2003 operating system.
- A single account management repository, using Active Directory® directory services to manage users and groups.
- Microsoft Exchange Server 2003, offering e-mail and collaboration tools such as calendaring and task lists. People can access e-mail using a Web browser through Microsoft Office Outlook® Web Access.
- Microsoft Live Communications Server 2005, supporting real-time collaboration using instant messaging, and presence information—so users working on Microsoft Office 2003 documents can see who else is online.
- Microsoft Internet and Security Acceleration Server 2004, improving network security and performance.

Netways deployed document management, e-fax, and workflow automation systems from Captaris and an electronic library application. It also implemented a Microsoft Learning Gateway framework, based on Microsoft Office SharePoint® Portal Server 2003 and Windows® SharePoint Services, to offer a complete e-learning portal for the school. Web Part technologies bring key information from other infrastructure applications, so that each portal user has their own personalized home page consisting of relevant information and services.

By adding Microsoft Content Management Server 2002, staff can update Web site content without needing specialist coding knowledge. Teachers can create lesson plans, manage classes, and create electronic assessments using Microsoft Class Server. Microsoft Dynamics™ CRM 3.0 helps administrators manage core information and relationships across the entire school. Finally, staff managing budgets and accounts use Microsoft Dynamics GP for financial planning and administration.

The Benefits

The new solution has given Fakieh School a state-of-the-art online education portal that supports its vision of a connected learning community. People can access resources and communicate effectively, wherever they are. Staff has better, timelier access to information and can offer higher-quality services, while students can continue learning at home. What's more, parents can enjoy greater interaction with the school with just an Internet connection.

- Students can continue learning beyond the classroom. Each student has a personal workspace that helps them manage homework and assignments, so they can always keep track of their work. They can also access library resources and communicate with others online, all from their own portal home page.
- Administrators can streamline processes and work more efficiently. Since replacing paper-based forms with an online system, each administration request triggers an automated workflow through the school. As a result, school resources are managed more effectively, and people are more satisfied with faster administration responses.
- Teachers spend less time on administration and more time teaching. By using the new portal, teachers can easily set grades without needing to retype duplicate information into different systems. What's more, colleagues can instantly share and reuse teaching resources online, so pupils throughout the school work with the highest-quality content available.
- Parents become more involved and better engaged with their children's education. They can now view lessons given at school and support reflective learning at home by building on classroom activities. Parents can also track assignments and view teachers' notes on their children's performance online. More timely, higher-quality information on progress helps parents become more engaged with school activities and better support their children. They can manage enrolment and school fees through their personalized portal at their convenience.



Technologies used

- Microsoft Active Directory
- Microsoft Class Server
- Microsoft Content Management Server 2002
- Microsoft Dynamics CRM 3.0
- Microsoft Dynamics GP 10.0
- Microsoft Exchange Server 2003
- Microsoft Office 2003
- Microsoft Office Communications Server 2003
- Microsoft Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003
- Microsoft Outlook Web Access
- Microsoft TV
- Microsoft Windows Server 2003 Enterprise Edition
- Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services
- Captaris RightFax
- Captaris Workflow
- Captaris Alchemy

Who are we?

Netways is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner with competencies in Information Worker and Business Solutions. Our solutions target a wide array of enterprise and small and medium size business challenges. In addition to our partnership with Microsoft, Netways has a well-built alliance with Captaris for providing fax automation, document management, and business process automation solutions. By leveraging our deep industry and technical expertise, Netways is able to provide customized end-to-end solutions for clients based on worldwide standards. The services we provide include consultancy, development, implementation, outsourcing, and training.



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