

## ApplianSys deliver improved internet access for Peter Symonds College with CACHEBOX

### Challenge

Peter Symonds College were looking to replace an existing caching solution that was no longer supported with one that was both cost effective and allowed them to service two sites with differing needs.

### Solution

One **CACHEBOX200** powered by Squid at the main campus. One **CACHEBOX080** also powered by Squid at the adult education centre away from the main campus.

### Key Benefits

*Value for money* – cost effective caching solution for education.

*Better use of bandwidth* – more efficient use of existing internet feed allows scope for further expansion in the future.

*Proactive Support* - reassurance of technical support team expertise in diagnosing and resolving issues quickly.

### A history of education

Peter Symonds College (PSC) is a sixth form college which prior to September 1974 was a boys' grammar school with origins traceable back to Christes Hospital in the 17th century. In the last three years the college has grown substantially, with the total number of students aged 16 to 18 reaching 2,615. Additionally the number of Learning and Skills Council (LSC)-funded, part-time adults enrolled at the college has increased from around 1,600 to 2,600 during the same period.

The college's main site, which caters for students aged 16 to 18, is close to the centre of Winchester, whilst the college's other site, the adult and continuing education centre, is at Weeke, three quarters of a mile from the main campus the college.

### Unsupported caching

The college accesses the Internet via the JANET academic network, using a 2Mb link, and has made use of the benefits of caching for three years. Charles Parish, Director of IT at Peter Symonds Sixth Form College had been using a Dell Caching Server preloaded with Novell caching software, but over time, it was "getting short of breath". This was despite the 20GB hard disk and the upgrade to 512MB of memory from the original 128MB, owing to the increased demands being placed on it. Performance was becoming an issue, and would ultimately be a problem in the classroom. At the same time, the solution was no longer being supported by Novell or Dell, and Parish was becoming increasingly concerned about what may happen if something went wrong, not to mention the lack of an available upgrade path.

Parish was looking for a new way to serve the college's Internet demands. He considered building his own server, but decided that it would be more effective for him to find a solution where a third party took ownership of support and configuration issues.

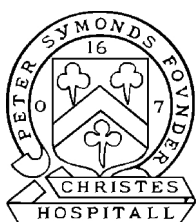
He investigated available devices, but, with the strict budgets of the academic world, he found that those that would provide the performance he was looking for were "frighteningly expensive". After approaching ApplianSys he found that its **CACHEBOX** product appeared to meet his needs at the right price. ApplianSys also has a development history with JANET and Loughborough University, and Parish was impressed with the company's academic connections and knowledge of the specific issues faced by educational establishments.

### A problem solved

The college was loaned an evaluation unit for two weeks to ensure that the proposed solution would indeed provide the performance the college were looking for. Various configurations were trialled, but a potential problem was discovered. The device performed well when set up in transparent proxy mode, except when it came to downloading files. 99% would be completed, but it would just not finish. An ApplianSys' engineer went to the college and worked with them to assess and solve the issue.

*"Having the engineer on site was a great help. We learned how the **CACHEBOX** works and he made useful suggestions. It gave me reassurance that if something did go wrong they'd respond quickly,"* said Parish.

It became apparent that the difficulties being experienced were due to the way the college's firewall worked with cache servers. The engineer identified two ways for PSC to resolve the problem, one of which takes advantage of the **CACHEBOX**'s WCCP implementation. As a result of ApplianSys' involvement, a wider network issue associated to deployment was solved.



*“Having the engineer on site was a great help. We learned how the CACHEBOX works and he made useful suggestions. It gave me reassurance that if something did go wrong they'd respond quickly”*

*“It's good to know that support's there and that ApplianSys cares how we're getting on, this is particularly important, especially with an eye to the future”*

With the problem resolved, the college selected **CACHEBOX200** for main Internet access, and used the **CACHEBOX050** to speed up access at the adult education centre. They chose to use separate devices for the two campuses, as the adult education centre needed access to very different websites, compared to the main site. As a result, they decided to make use of a separate box to take some of the load.

Now the boxes provide twice the performance of the previous cache solution and store at least four times as much material as before.

#### **A solution for the future**

PSC is pleased with the solution it has in place, but, more importantly for Parish is his satisfaction with the level of support he knows he can rely on from ApplianSys. Technical staff telephone him unprompted to see how things are going, and if there is a problem or a question to be answered, as there was during the trial period, they don't let it “disappear”. It will be kept live until it has been resolved. For PSC this kind of peace of mind is invaluable:

*“It's good to know that support's there and that ApplianSys cares how we're getting on, this is particularly important, especially with an eye to the future. As time goes on, there will be new and more bandwidth-hungry types of applications that students will need to access video, audio, flash media etc and these will all need to be delivered across the network,”* concluded Parish.



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