



Client: Hamilton Senior High School
Sector: Education
Location: Hamilton Hill, Western Australia



HAMILTON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Hamilton SHS transforms the learning experience with IT

■ Overview

You'd be hard pressed to find a teacher more passionate about the potential of IT in education than Phil Casas.

Phil has been at Hamilton Senior High School (SHS) for 15 years, initially supervising Business Education and Information Technology and more recently as a Deputy Principal with a strong focus on IT.

With around 500 students, Hamilton SHS is a relatively small school. It is also situated in a socially diverse catchment area.

However, Phil's passion and the support of equally committed Principal Donna McDonald and her staff has enabled Hamilton to really 'punch above its weight' in Australia's education IT arena.

As one of just 20 Australian schools in Microsoft's worldwide Innovative Schools Program, Hamilton SHS is a leading light for the positive outcomes IT can deliver for educational engagement and effectiveness.

With a theme of 'Modernisation to Transformation', Phil, Donna, and the Hamilton team are keenly sought after to share their remarkable story of success widely across Australia and further afield.

The Hamilton education IT philosophy is about investing not just in hardware and software, but in training teachers to use the capabilities IT delivers effectively to engage students and improve learning outcomes.

■ Challenge

"Over the past 20 or 25 years, many millions of dollars have been invested in education IT," said Phil Casas.

"Unfortunately, in many cases that investment has simply not delivered the educational outcomes it promised."

"Hamilton SHS has its own challenges as a relatively small school with many students who come from backgrounds where educational aspirations are not particularly high.

"For the whole school, we have a goal of helping every student achieve success. That means working with them to discover the things they're good at – and supporting them to succeed in those areas.

"Ultimately, some will progress to university, some to TAFE and others will adopt a vocational pathway.

"However, our aim is to engage every single student at Hamilton in the best educational experiences and outcomes we can offer for their individual needs, interests and abilities.

"As educators, our particular passion was to unlock the 'missing link' that would transform our hard-won dollar investment in IT to real educational outcomes that would potentially transform the lives and futures of the students at Hamilton SHS.

"A significant challenge was obtaining the quality of IT resources we wanted at a price we could afford, and that's where Stott + Hoare were brilliant," said Phil.

Case Study

■ Solution

IT, in education or anywhere else, is no good if it doesn't work," said Phil Casas.

"The first step is the right device for the task – at a competitive cost." Stott + Hoare supplied Hamilton SHS with 66 Lenovo x220 tablet PCs.

"The x220 tablets provide mobility and the convenience of stylus, finger or keyboard input with the performance of a full-powered notebook," said Natalie Williams from the Stott + Hoare Education Team.

Lenovo is also renowned for its Tier 1 build quality, and the rugged reliability that makes it ideal for applications such as education.

"Reliable, durable and flexible tablet PCs were also critical to our 'take-out' model," said Phil.

"For us, it's worth its weight in gold. Where IT can increase learning potential in class by between 10 and 50%, taking the PCs home can drive that increase up past 80%."

To get the high-spec technology he wanted at the most competitive price possible, Phil contacted a number of potential suppliers, however, Stott + Hoare were by far the most responsive to his needs.

"The Stott + Hoare Education Team were great – they worked with us to get us the Lenovo x220 tablet PCs with all the specs we wanted, including Intel Core processors – and worked with Lenovo to make them affordable," said Phil.

"We got great support initially, and Stott + Hoare's backup has been solid too. We've had almost no problems with the Lenovo tablets, and one or two minor issues have been fixed quickly."

Phil and Principal Donna McDonald aimed to embed digital literacy as part of the professional development program for their teachers. IT could save time for teachers with heavy workloads, but, as with most schools, Hamilton's teachers are from all points on the continuum between 'digital natives' and 'digital dinosaurs'.

A comprehensive program was put in place that dovetailed with the Microsoft Peer Coaching Program.

"Teachers worked cooperatively, shared experiences of what did and didn't work in the classroom, and grew together in their understanding of education IT and how to most effectively use it to improve student learning outcomes," said Phil.

Familiar and comfortable with the technology, Hamilton's staff embarked on using it to really make dramatic gains in students' engagement in the learning experience.

"Really increasing student engagement is probably the single most critical benefit of IT in education," said Phil.

"We're learning too, so it's been very much a trial and error approach – keeping what works and discarding what doesn't."

In terms of teacher-student engagement and interaction, Microsoft OneNote has been a stand-out success for Hamilton SHS.

"OneNote is Microsoft's 'killer app' for education," said Natalie Williams from Stott + Hoare.

"With the stylus-enabled Lenovo tablet PCs, OneNote just makes interactive student-teacher collaboration brilliantly easy and effective," explained Phil.

"We can share notations on work; written, graphics, images, videos – or even presentations or projects that include all of these elements – quickly and effectively.

"The OneNote interface – an electronic version of a tabbed ring binder – is easy and intuitive."

Its multi-user capability allows offline editing and later synchronisation and merging. This is great for collaboration in workgroups where members are not always online.

Hamilton SHS and its dedicated staff use education IT remarkably effectively to improve student outcomes.

"Key elements are the quality, reliability and flexibility of the high quality Lenovo x220 tablet PCs, and the remarkable effectiveness of Microsoft OneNote on a Windows 7 platform," said Phil.

"The Stott + Hoare Education Team helped us access those key elements affordably, and their service, advice, backup and support has been flawless," concluded Phil.

Hamilton SHS – Key considerations

- High-spec Tier 1 Lenovo tablet PCs at an affordable cost
- Rugged reliability and service backup to support a 'take-out' education IT model
- Windows 7 platform to support Microsoft OneNote – the 'killer app' for education
- Total supply and support by Stott + Hoare

To discuss how Stott + Hoare can provide a cost-effective end-to-end solution for your education IT requirements, please contact our Education Team on (08) 9244 0000 or email education@stotthoare.com.au

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