

# Case Study: The first implementation of SharePoint 2007 in Further Education

Esher College upgrade to MOSS 2007 - providing access to student information via SharePoint and allowing staff and students to work from home

## Overview:

### Client Profile

Esher College is a Further Education College in Surrey with over 1500 full time students.

### Client Situation

Esher College wanted to take advantage of the new features in MOSS 2007 whilst redesigning their College Portal.

### Solution

Staff and College portals with My Sites were created using MOSS 2007.

### Benefits

- Staff and students are able to work from home.
- Student information is easily accessible via SharePoint
- Students have a single place of reference for their timetables, college announcements, resources and assignment data.



## Background

Esher College is a successful and growing Further Education College with over 1500 full time students as well as classes in the evening and weekends for adult students.

The college delivers a first class ICT system and is a Beacon College. Benefiting from the Microsoft Academic Licensing Programme, the college bases its ILT strategy on Microsoft products.



Parabola had previously implemented SharePoint (SPS 2003) for Esher College in September 2005, effectively delivering an intranet, collaboration tools, external access and integration with the college MIS and BROMCOM. This implementation allowed student information and attendance details to be displayed via SharePoint along with up to date timetables for all staff and students. Two portals were created, a College Portal for use by staff and students, and a Staff Portal for use by staff only.

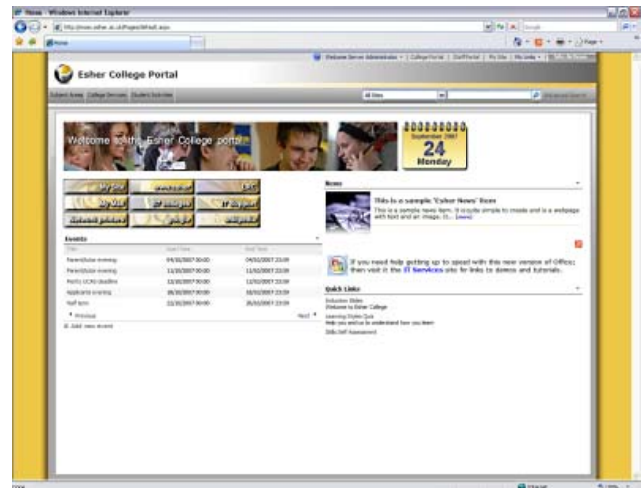
Parabola also developed a tool to synchronize the student database with Active Directory. With SharePoint access controlled by Active Directory, all changes to the student database are automatically updated in Active Directory. During the enrolment process, user accounts are created by the tool, saving time and effort in an already busy period.

**“With the new features and functionality available and the integration with Office 2007; MOSS 2007 can help us make our teaching more effective.”**

## The business challenge - Upgrade and take advantage of MOSS 2007

Esher College commissioned Parabola to implement Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 (MOSS 2007) with a deadline for the start of the 2007/2008 academic year. If the project did not meet this deadline, it would have probably been delayed by a full year. At the same time SharePoint had been completely rebuilt and enhanced by Microsoft. This was a ground breaking project as very few organisations had undertaken such an upgrade at this time.

The college saw the opportunity to use their experiences with SPS 2003 to improve and redesign the College Portal, making it more intuitive for students and staff to use. The college also wished to make full use of the latest Microsoft technologies, such as the integration of MOSS 2007 with Office 2007. Could the new features and functionality in MOSS 2007 help teaching be more effective?



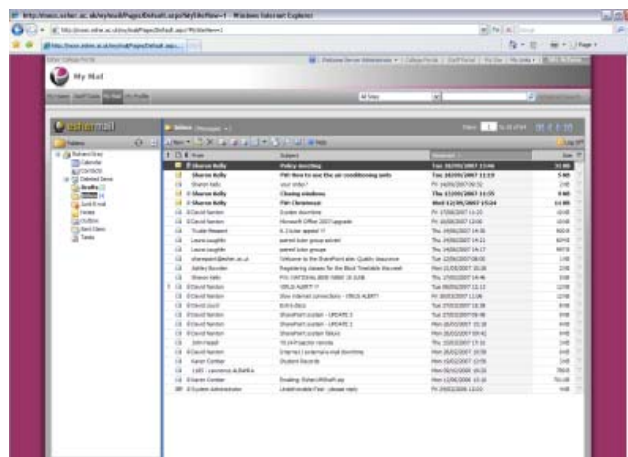
Esher College Portal homepage

## Parabola's approach to the project

Although Parabola had worked closely with Esher for over 2 years it was still very important to fully explore the objectives and requirements of the college with regard to this project and to define a vision and scope for the project. In addition, some completely new scope had evolved since the SharePoint 2003 implementation such as the need to target curriculum materials to students depending upon their courses.

Parabola also spent time researching and experimenting with the new features of SharePoint 2007 on a development server, examples including; Roll-up Web Parts, ASP.net master pages and Personalisation sites. This enabled Parabola to be able to give an informed opinion on what might work for Esher.

As the College Portal was to be redesigned and restructured, a new Information Structure Plan had to be created. This involved reviewing how the college used the portal currently



My Mail - a personalisation site displaying Outlook Web Access

and how it could be improved. Initially a feedback workshop was run at the college. Forty key members of staff were invited and gave their views on what could be improved and what was most needed. Many of the points made in this session became key factors in the new design.

Project management was a vital element of the service provided. The fixed deadlines, diverse dependencies and broad team involvement required careful planning and control. Regular project meetings were conducted to review the project plan, the risks and the outstanding project issues.

A pre-requisite to implementing MOSS 2007 was to upgrade the college SQL Server cluster to SQL 2005 and transfer all databases and applications.

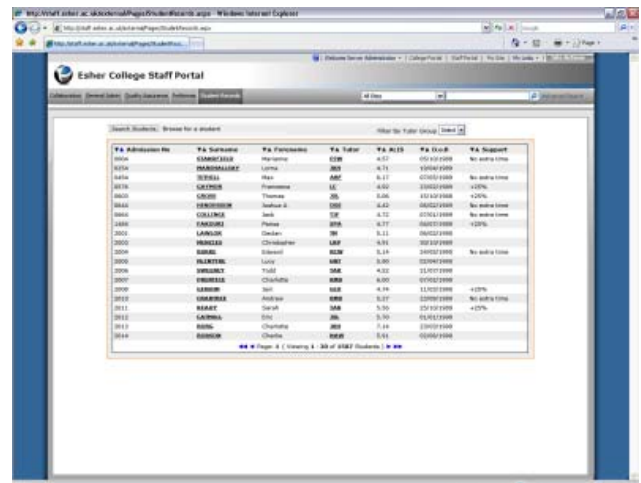
Branding for the Staff Portal, College Portal and My Sites was agreed and templates were created based on graphic designs produced by Esher's ILT Manager, David Lloyd.

Selection of the correct upgrade process is extremely important when moving from SharePoint 2003 to 2007. After reviewing Esher's current databases Parabola advised that the Staff Portal be upgraded to MOSS 2007 using an in-place upgrade. Before the upgrade, Parabola transferred all the databases and applications over to SQL Server 2005.

The College Portal was not upgraded, but rebuilt. Having been redesigned and restructured all relevant content was then transferred.

All custom web parts and applications were upgraded to work with MOSS 2007, allowing the My Site template to be created with Timetable and Assignments web parts. Personalisation sites were also created for Outlook Web Access and Staff Tools.

The Active Directory synchronization tool was updated for use with MOSS 2007 and as well as creating the student accounts, it also automatically created a My Site for them. This mitigated against lots of new students trying to create a My Site at the same time and causing performance problems on the server.



Student Records - student information from the MIS displayed in the Staff Portal

The system went live on schedule and is proving to be a great success with the college.

David Lloyd - the IT Development Director at Esher commented:

*"This has been a tough project to deliver and we're delighted with the service we have received from Parabola".*

## Benefits

Esher College now have a college wide system which has significantly improved their infrastructure.

Staff and students now use SharePoint technology to support themselves in teaching, learning and administration. They have better access to curriculum content and targeted information means that they only receive what is relevant to them.

The portals have a consistent corporate look and feel resulting from a clean and simple site template. With the key college systems integrated, student information is easily accessible via SharePoint.

DML	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
8:50 AM		2:ADB-C2		1:ADB-A2	
10:15 AM		G003		G003	
10:25 AM			BREAK		
10:25 AM					
10:25 AM	C:WEB-C1	2:ADB-C2			
11:15 AM	G006	G003			
11:40 AM	DML	C:WEB-A1			
12:10 PM	G006	G006			
12:30 PM			LUNCH		
1:30 PM					
1:50 PM		1:ADB-A3	2:ADB-C2		
2:50 PM		G003	G003		
3:10 PM	2:ADB-C2		2:ADB-C2		
4:10 PM	G003		G003		

The Staff Timetable web part

A key benefit is offsite access to SharePoint document libraries. With staff and students living up to 25 miles away, they are able to easily access resources externally and therefore work from home.

The Timetable web part developed by Parabola takes information from the MIS and presents it to the user in an appropriate format – either as a student, staff member or for a whole department. This means that all staff and students have access to their timetable information at home or college and any changes to timetabling are available immediately.

A new web part has been added - My Assignments. This takes data from the Marking Records application used by Esher (which was developed for them by Parabola) and displays relevant information to students. Now students have a single place of reference for their timetables, college announcements, resources and assignment data.

My Assignments			
To Do	Title	Class	Due Date
Overdue	Were Fascism And Marxism Completely Antithetical?	1:ADB:A1	9/3/2007
Today	Assess Hitler's Role In The Third Reich	1:ADB:A1	11/5/2007
This Week			
Next Week			
Submitted			
Marked			

The My Assignments web part

## Technology Used

The following technology was used in the implementation of this project:

- MOSS 2007
- Office 2007
- SQL Server 2005
- Exchange 2007
- .NET Web Parts



## References/Links

<http://www.esher.ac.uk>

<http://www.parabolasoft.co.uk/Products/SharePoint/Overview.aspx>

<http://www.microsoft.com/sharepoint/default.msp>

[Esher SharePoint solution praised by the Quality Improvement Agency \(QIA\)](#)

## Further Information

For further details and a quote based upon your particular requirements, please contact:

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