

# Case Study: Havering Sixth Form College streamlines administration by integrating Active Directory with UNIT-e

## Overview:

### Client Profile

Based in Essex, Havering Sixth Form College (HSFC) offers full and part time course for 16-19 year olds.

### Client Situation

HSFC has over 2200 students plus 250 staff, with over 1000 new enrolments every year, so maintaining academic and administrative records has historically been onerous and labour intensive.

### Solution

HSFC is using Microsoft Office SharePoint Server, which incorporates Active Directory for directory services and authentication. Parabola developed an Active Directory (AD) synchronization tool that enabled data held on the college Database, SharePoint server, Active Directory and Microsoft Exchange to be automatically synchronised and kept up to date.

### Benefits

- Data only has to be entered once
- 'My Site' personalised web sites automatically created
- SharePoint can be used as a college staff directory.

## Background

Based in Essex, Havering Sixth Form College (HSFC) offers full and part time course for 16-19 year olds. The college provides programmes in 12 sector subject areas with a strong focus on level 3 courses, in particular General Certificate of Education (GCE) AS levels and A levels. HSFC acts as an open access sixth form college for its 13 partner schools and a further five schools with sixth forms. It accepts learners from these schools regardless of their level of prior attainment.

HSFC has over 2200 students plus 250 staff, with over 1000 new enrolments every year, so maintaining academic and administrative records has historically been onerous and labour-intensive – particularly as there were several systems in use each with separate databases.

## The Requirement

HSFC asked Parabola to ensure that Student, staff and course enrolment details was managed in UNIT-e only and other systems would then be automatically kept in line with this database

HSFC's objective was to significantly reduce the five days worth of manual keying needed to enter student enrolment and leaver's records, in addition to entering changes in staff details, and courses that occur during each academic year.

Havering wanted to automate the creation and updating of:

- Active Directory accounts
- Email addresses in Exchange
- My Documents folders on roaming profiles
- Security groups in AD
- SharePoint My Sites
- SharePoint profiles

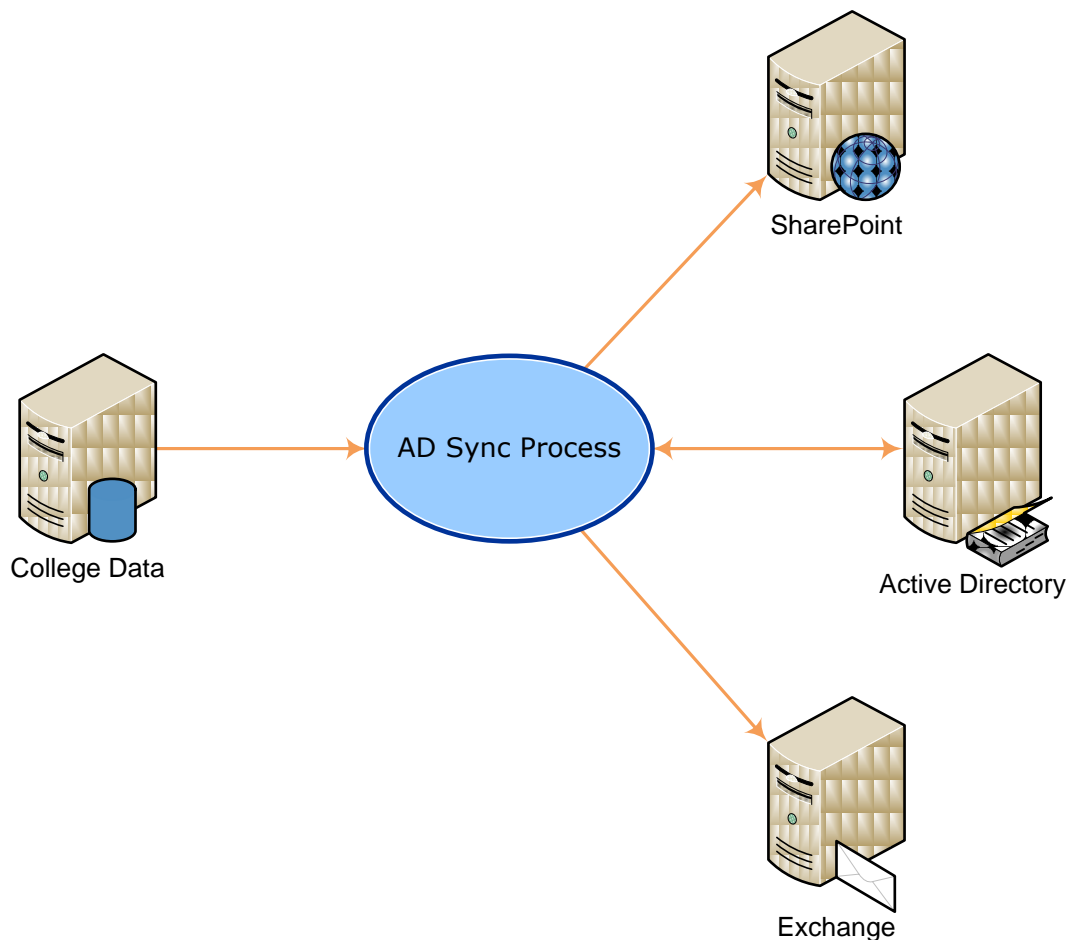
## The Solution

Parabola's approach was to design a solution to ensure that student information is entered only once in the College database and is then automatically synchronised with AD, SharePoint and Exchange.

HSFC is using Microsoft Office SharePoint Server, which incorporates Active Directory for directory services and authentication. After carefully analysing HSFC's needs and drawing on its extensive experience working in SharePoint Environments, Parabola developed an Active Directory (AD) synchronisation process that enabled data held on the college Database, SharePoint server, Active Directory and Microsoft Exchange to be automatically synchronised and kept up to date.

Richard Gray explains Parabola's approach: "We recommended AD Sync to HSFC because SharePoint is dependent upon an accurate and up-to-date Active Directory as this manages the user login details for the network and therefore SharePoint. SharePoint also relies on Active Directory to hold details of user groups – such as all the students on a particular course, enabling information to be targeted to a specific group. It's vital that all the information is recorded and maintained in one place because it is updated frequently"

At HSFC, AD Sync takes data from UNIT-e (provided by Capita) and automatically updates Active Directory with each users account details and group membership. E.g. membership of a class will be update if a student enrolls on a course.



## Key benefits

The new system has delivered improved accuracy and consistency of information as well as efficiency savings.

- Data such as student record information only has to be entered once by staff, saving significant administrative resources
- Data quality as significantly improved is keying errors are reduced
- 'My Site' personalised web sites are automatically created for each user in SharePoint, providing a central location where students and staff can manage and store documents, content, links, and contacts and enabling teachers and pupils to work together more collaboratively
- Error reporting enables errors to be identified quickly and be rectified.
- SharePoint people search delivers an online college staff directory.
- SharePoint administration is simplified as AD groups can be used
- Accounts maintenance can be scheduled, so, for example, the accounts of leavers can be disabled at the end of the summer break. If a student needs to return to college, then the account can simply be reactivated.

### ***Andrew Acreman the CIS Manager at HSFC commented***

***“there are other benefits ; by keeping AD up-to-date in this way, we are able to use AD as an additional common data source for many other third-part products that the College operates. Furthermore, it provides an ongoing check that our UNIT-e HR records are always correct”***

## Result

HSFC estimates that the new system saves the equivalent of around five working man days a year by removing the need to re-key information into multiple systems.

Management, teaching staff and students can also rely on the information as they know that it will be consistent and up to date.

## Technology Used

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

- Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007
- Active Directory

- Exchange 2007
- .NET 3.5

## References/Links

- <http://www.havering-sfc.ac.uk>
- <http://www.parabolasoft.co.uk/Products/SharePoint/Overview.aspx>
- <http://www.microsoft.com/sharepoint/default.msp>

## About Parabola

Parabola is a Microsoft Gold partner with extensive experience in delivering solutions using Microsoft .NET, SharePoint 2007 and other Microsoft technologies. Parabola has completed hundreds of successful IT projects both large and small and is a successful provider of collaborative working solutions and IT services to a wide range of SMEs and public bodies.

The company has extensive experience in Further Education working for colleges including Esher College, City of Westminster College, Filton College, Kingston College and NESCOL. Other clients include the Royal Borough of Kingston and AMI Ltd.

Founded in 1999, Parabola offers consultancy, project management, systems integration, custom software development, training and support which help organisations achieve their business goals with technology. The company has Microsoft Competencies in Information Worker Solutions (SharePoint Portals and Collaboration) and Custom Development Solutions (Rich Desktop and Web Developments).

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