

Case Study: Oxford and Cherwell Valley College - SharePoint Implementation

Further Education College improves staff collaboration, provides off-site access and builds a student intranet using MOSS 2007

Overview:

Client Profile

Oxford and Cherwell Valley College provides further education to 20,000 students in the Oxford and Banbury area.

Client Situation

OCVC was looking to upgrade their existing SPS 2003 implementation to use the new features available in MOSS 2007 whilst replacing their existing intranet.

Solution

Staff and College Portals created using MOSS 2007 along with My Sites for all staff and students.

Benefits

- College intranet replaced
- Externally accessible
- Document controls in place
- Collaboration tools available
- Targeted News and Announcements



Background

Oxford and Cherwell Valley College (OCVC) is a large further education college split over four campuses. OCVC offers over 1,000 courses to 6,000 full time students and a further 14,000 part time students. The college had previously implemented SharePoint Portal Server 2003 (SPS 2003) but found staff take-up disappointing. The limited navigational and structure controls in SPS 2003 made it difficult to reflect OCVC's changing structure and staff were unable to find the information they needed.

OCVC contacted Parabola after deciding to implement Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 (MOSS 2007). OCVC were keen to use Parabola's experience to ensure that the technical and user issues that they encountered with SPS 2003 were avoided this time round.

“SharePoint could replace the staff Intranet and at the same time provide us with the tools to improve document management. If we can enable remote access to these tools this could in itself make a big difference”

Parabola's approach to the project

Parabola's first action was to conduct an envisioning session with the projects major stakeholders to define the project objectives, vision and scope.

Amongst the objectives identified were:

- To improve college communication for staff and students by providing a well structured and designed portal to replace the current intranet.
- To enable easier searching for files by cleaning and restructuring the file storage and by implementing a SharePoint search service.
- To enable staff and students to work offsite (e.g. at home) and still have access to the resources they need.
- To provide better collaboration features to allow staff groups to work together more efficiently.
- To provide an effective document repository.

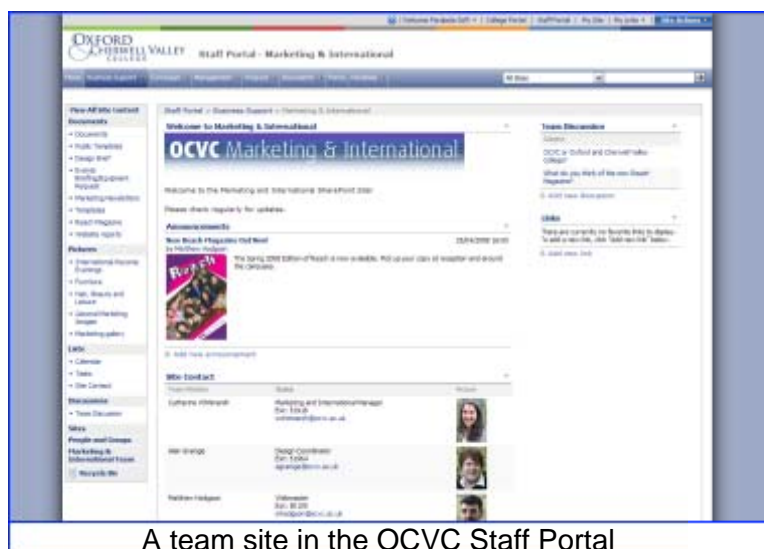


With the scope and objectives confirmed, Parabola created a replica Staff Portal on OCVV's test server. This enabled OCVV to test the features and functionality available in MOSS 2007 prior to the live implementation. Resulting from this trial period, OCVV produced a set of requirements which Parabola used to create a detailed Project Schedule.

The Project Schedule consisted of two phases; Phase 1 was the implementation of a Staff Portal to replace the existing SPS 2003 portal and give staff access to collaboration tools and My Sites. Phase 2 would provide a College Portal for use by staff and students which would replace the existing college intranet.

Phase 1 was scheduled for the start of the 2008 summer term with Phase 2 scheduled to be completed for the start of the 2008/09 academic year.

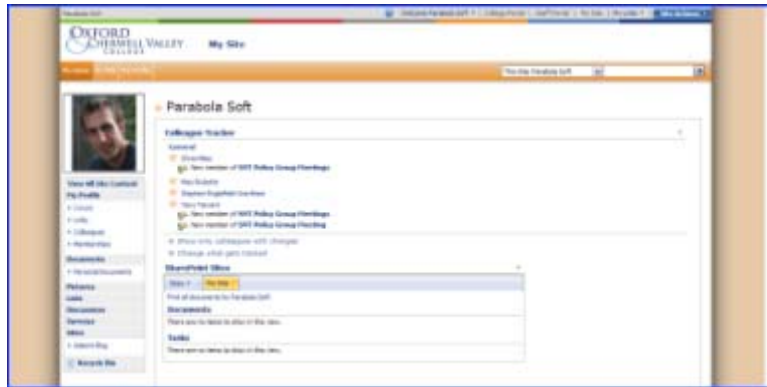
Phase 1 – The Staff Portal



A team site in the OCVV Staff Portal

Before the development of Phase 1 commenced, Parabola completed a Capacity Plan and reviewed the existing hardware configuration. Resulting from this work; OCVV decided that a new server would be used with the option to expand it to a server farm if Phase 2 required so. This gave OCVV the capacity to make the most out of SharePoint whilst ensuring the flexibility for future expansion.

Parabola then worked closely with OCVC to design a structure for the Staff Portal. The resulting structure ensured that each team or department had their own site for collaborative work and that the sites were intuitively classified in the portal hierarchy. Documents and other content residing in the existing SPS 2003 portal were migrated over allowing the SPS 2003 portal to be decommissioned. InfoPath Forms Services was configured to allow the use of browser-based forms such as applications for parking permits. The search service was customised to add file shares to the index and provide specific search scopes.



An OCVC My Site

Each member of staff was given a My Site for storing personal documents and accessing their Exchange mailbox. The Staff Portal and My Site were then configured to be externally available allowing Staff to work offsite without saving documents to memory sticks. Custom master pages were created to use the college branding and provide consistency throughout SharePoint.

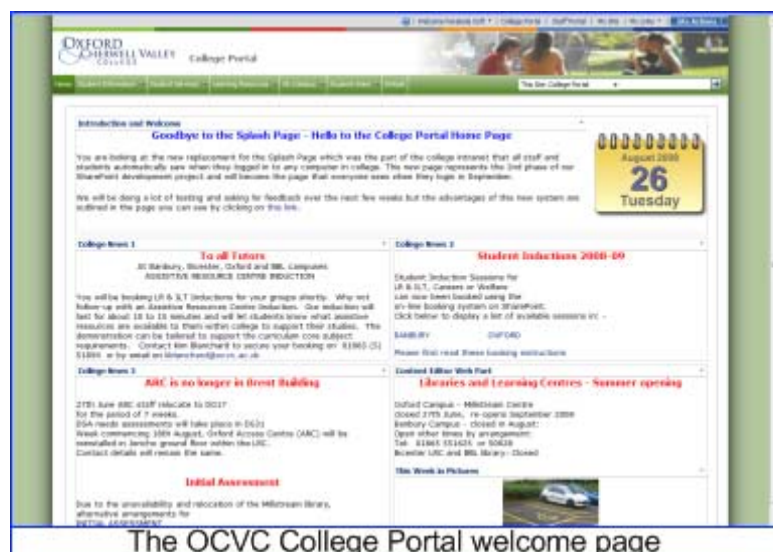
OCVC staff already had experience of using SharePoint so Parabola ran a training session for the administrators, trainers and power users. This session covered both the existing and new features of MOSS 2007 and enabled the attendees to train their colleagues.

Phase 1 went live on schedule with Parabola providing support as required. Once Phase 1 had been signed off, Parabola provided an implementation report detailing the configuration and customisation work that had been done.

Phase 2 – The College Portal

Work began on Phase 2 in the summer break with a publishing portal created to replace the existing college intranet. Parabola provided an advanced training session in the use of publishing sites, allowing OCVC to create the content themselves.

A new master page was deployed for the College Portal along with My Sites for students.



The OCVC College Portal welcome page

The College Portal will become the default Internet Explorer homepage and will be used to provide targeted news to staff and students.

All the information required by students such as career advice, counselling and the Students Union site will be available in the College Portal. The College Portal will also contain further college and campus information such as lists of first aiders and restaurant menus.

As with the Staff Portal, the College Portal will be accessible from off site, enabling staff and students to be able to find information from anywhere.

Chris Miles – ILT Manager at OCVC commented on the success of the project:

“After all the weeks of planning and development it was a great experience to demonstrate the new Portal to a group of staff on the morning it went live and get such a positive response .”

Benefits

- OCVC now have the infrastructure, training and tools to build collaborative working solutions.
- Staff can now use document management tools such as workflow, versioning and metadata.
- News and information can now be targeted to staff and students so that they only receive what is relevant to them.
- Staff to easily find the documents they need thanks to the improved portal structure and search functionality.
- The Staff Portal, College Portal and My Sites are all available offsite allowing staff and students to easily work from home.

Further Phases

In the future, OCVC plan to integrate SharePoint with their student database. This would provide access for Staff to information such as student information, timetables and attendance. OCVC use Moodle as their VLE and would also like to integrate this with SharePoint when better tools are available.

Technology Used

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

- MOSS 2007
- Office 2007
- SQL Server 2005
- Exchange 2007
- ISA Server 2006
- Microsoft Project 2007



References/Links

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

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

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

Further Information

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