



Promethean Help King's Cross Education Action Zone

"Video conferencing brings school performances into the 21st Century."

- Make greater use of shared resources
- Support and training
- Enhanced learning environment



King's Cross (EAZ)



The Challenge

Imagine six schools with 2500 pupils, covering 3 miles, all linked via a broadband laser network. In your mind's eye you can now see what King's Cross Education Action Zone (KXEAZ) has made a reality – a revolutionary infrastructure created to form a virtual community for the five primaries and one secondary school taking part in the initiative.

With this impressive communications network in place, Derek Smith, Director of KXEAZ, set about finding a way of using it to involve all of the schools in an interactive art project. This led to the conceptualisation of a virtual rendition of the opera 'Carmen', where pupils from each of the schools would participate and following their own contribution, watch their peers continue the performance over the broadband connection.

After securing funding for the project from the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), and the relevant equipment from technology suppliers, Derek's dream for KXEAZ was getting closer to becoming a reality. He comments: "Our schools were interconnected by the broadband laser link, and we needed to demonstrate just what it was capable of. The funding from NESTA and generosity of companies who lent equipment went a long way to helping us to achieve this."

It appeared as though they were ready to roll, with the technology and equipment at their fingertips and artistic guidance ready and waiting from a leading opera company. What they were still lacking however, was the back up support of professional videoconferencing expertise.

The Promethean Solution

Previously, KXEAZ had worked with Promethean to implement award-winning interactive whiteboard technology in schools across the zone, making sure that each school had at least one Promethean ACTIVboard in their IT suite. Through this implementation a successful working relationship was struck up, leading KXEAZ to turn to Promethean for the

videoconferencing project. Derek explains: "Having worked with Promethean before, we knew that their support package was excellent. Given the scale of the 'Carmen' project, we needed a supplier that could provide an

efficient installation and comprehensive support programme from start to finish – which we knew we could rely on Promethean for."

The videoconferencing unit was to be installed in 'Platform 1', an impressively equipped community learning centre constructed in the grounds of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Secondary School. The solution was to provide a window for schools in KXEAZ to communicate with the community, thus allowing long term and mutually beneficial relationships to be built.

Peter Barrett, ICT Project Manager for KXEAZ comments: "The installation was second to none in that our tight timescales did not cause the quality of the service to be compromised. We had a dedicated sales manager on hand to provide us with the support and advice we needed to get the videoconferencing unit up and running."





The Benefits

Promethean is committed to providing a comprehensive support package to its customers, aware that it is essential for them to be fully equipped with the skills needed for optimal use of the products. So when Promethean was told of the pending 'Carmen' project, it came as no surprise therefore that support in the form of videoconferencing expertise was forthcoming. Peter explains: "Right from the word go, Promethean was keen to get on board and provide us with all the help we needed. As the day of the performance drew nearer, it was particularly reassuring to know that help was always on hand in case sticky technical situations arose at the last minute."

Aside from the freely available technical expertise, KXEAZ was able to benefit from the

existing ACTIVboard technology installed in the schools. Peter explains: "Every school in KXEAZ has at least one ACTIVboard, which means the children are familiar with using the technology. On the day of the performance this turned out to be a clear advantage as viewing the rendition on the boards was second nature to them."

The Future

When the action zone came to the end of its term, it was soon reformed with the inclusion of a special needs school. When submitting the application to be recreated, successful and innovative use of ICT was a consideration and certainly helped to secure its future.

'Carmen' gave KXEAZ the opportunity to demonstrate the capability of its new technology. Plans for now, and the foreseeable future, are well on the way to incorporating the solution into the school's everyday life, with the ultimate goal being to raise achievement across the board.

“About Promethean”

Promethean is dedicated to the development and supply of ICT solutions as teaching tools in the classroom to accelerate learning gains across the whole curriculum.

Promethean systems create an interactive teaching environment that enables multimedia delivery to whole groups.

A UK manufacturer, Promethean offers full installation, full system training, hot-line support

by telephone and e-mail, in-field support and repair. We provide the complete solution to education, distance and flexible learning, collaborative working and training.

Solutions include:

ACTIVboard Interactive Whiteboards, ACTIVstudio multimedia software and ACTIVision video-conferencing systems.

Wide format displays for data and video and all encompassing solutions for presentations.



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