



acer
for education

TECHNOLOGY SPOTLIGHT



intel



LORETO COLLEGE COORPAROO CASE STUDY

With technology constantly changing, schools are perpetually challenged to adapt and keep students motivated, staff trained and parents informed. Loreto College Coorparoo is a school that is always trying to keep ahead of the curve through communication and education around technology. Acer has been a hardware partner to the school for a number of years, and together with the school's Technology Services and Support (TSS) team – who are well-versed in technology and its applications in teaching – they are able to support their faculty in delivering quality education to students.

This paper focuses on the specific laptop program that Loreto has in place, the technology challenges the school faces and how they address these, in addition to a number of initiatives the school has taken to improve the technology and learning experience of its students.



ABOUT LORETO

Loreto College Coorparoo is an all-girls independent Catholic secondary school located in the Brisbane suburb of Coorparoo in Queensland. Founded in 1928 by the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM), otherwise known as the Loreto Sisters, the College is home to 900 plus students.

Based on the legacy of Mary Ward – who founded the IBVM in 1609 – the school’s vision is: to offer a Catholic education that liberates, empowers and motivates students to use their individual gifts with confidence, creativity and generosity in loving and responsible service.

Loreto also takes pride in a diverse and challenging curriculum and a staff that – in the words of Principal, Kim Wickham, “support students to have the courage to be themselves.”

TEACHING AND LEARNING WITH TECHNOLOGY

Technology is an integral part of Loreto’s approach to teaching and learning.

“It is weaved symbiotically into Loreto’s curriculum in a way that we utilise it to enhance the College’s teaching capability with the use of auditory, visual, or both, and sometimes with Virtual Reality technology,” explains John Salceda, Head of ICT Strategy, Services and Operations at the school.

John oversees how computing technology is implemented and supported for both students and staff. He stresses that the value of the technology is primarily in its use as a tool for teaching staff.



“As much as technology is an integral part of our curriculum, the bottom line is that it is only additional help for our outstanding, highly efficient and dedicated faculty and support staff,” he states.



COMPUTING PROGRAM

Loreto College Coorparoo has a one-to-one laptop program where the school provides a device to 900 plus students across Years 7 to 12. Each student is responsible for their own device, however, the school ensures that the students are supported by a robust IT infrastructure and technical expertise of the TSS Team.

According to John, the school currently provides Acer 2-in-1 Windows Technology devices to all students. Students in Years 7 and 10 are supplied with an Acer Spin 3 model, while students in Years 8, 9, 11 and 12 are supplied with Acer Spin 5 models.

Moreover, Loreto has a dedicated IT Lab for technology to service digital and design subjects, providing students with access to high end desktop computers. This year, it is undergoing technical capacity and design review that will integrate high performance custom built Acer N-Series small form factor (SFF) desktops.



DIGITAL CHALLENGES

The school's major digital challenge is the ongoing security threats that the TSS team face on a daily basis.

These include:

- Increased risk of inappropriate file and content sharing and the potential of sharing malware
- Access to third party apps that may not be secure
- Potential exposure to phishing
- Identity theft (through compromised email and social media accounts)
- Crypto locker

John says his TSS team actively uses industry standard (SANS) forensic techniques to combat these threats. To complement these internal skills, they also provide continuous education and training to both staff and students.

“Education is by far the best way to address these challenges,” enthuses John. “By continually educating our users about the risks and how to avoid and/or deal with them means we have a major part of the challenge under control.”



Intel® Core™
Processors

Effective communication is therefore essential.

“This is where our amazing communication team comes in. Whenever we have something new or anticipate that something might happen, communications are prepared and disseminated appropriately and in a timely manner,” John points out. “At Loreto, we believe that the best way to successfully accomplish something is to get as much support as possible from the whole school community behind any project and that the best way to get the community support is by keeping them regularly updated.”



ACER SUPPORT

The school chooses Acer as a partner because their devices are complementary to their needs, and also because Acer provides excellent after sales support.

“Aside from the fact that Acer’s laptops and monitors deliver what we require for student and staff use, it is Acer’s after sales continuing support that makes a massive difference,” elaborates Mr Salceda. “If ever we need to escalate anything with regards to any Acer product, we have two layers of help who are able and willing to assist anytime and any day – even after hours, I know I can call on Acer.”

Acer’s network has meant Loreto has always been provided for, both in hardware and technical expertise.

“Acer have always been proactive when it comes to hardware support. Because of our close partnership, we have never been in a situation where we are left without a device to work on,” John expounds. “Acer’s spare parts and device projection algorithm works well for us. A classic example of this is when Acer sent 10 spare laptops without any reason then after a month these laptops became really handy because COVID-19 hit and in lockdown supply became scarce.”

John hopes the positive relationship and support from Acer will not only remain but continue to improve. This is an expectation that he shares and hopes for his own TSS department.



TECH-DRIVEN PROJECTS

“From 2018, when I joined the College, which coincidentally is also the same year that our current principal Mrs Wickham commenced, we have been continually changing and improving our learning programs and technology by asking the question: ‘how we can improve this?’”

John explains.

Improvements have come in the form of a number of projects, one includes a Learning Management System (LMS).

“From the perspective of a teaching and learning project, we are deploying a new LMS which will create a much tighter integration with our learning analytics systems, both with a Microsoft solution and a third party provider,” John explains. “With this in mind, we have been continuously providing on-demand training to our staff and students to help them better understand and utilise the technology in place and how to get the best from it.” Updating their security system is another ongoing project.

“Our security system is continuously evolving and improving from firewall, internet / data filtering to growing our digital forensics capability internally – which, incidentally, is one of my main technical passions and skills,” says John. “We have started an integration solution from Saasyan to complement our existing Palo Alto Networks (PAN) and evaluate how well it works with our current Microsoft security and HPE infrastructure, networking and security.”

Additionally, the TSS team has been utilising their coding and scripting skills using python, PS and SQL, to implement a real-time laptop support repair and part request service with Acer.

“This gives Acer’s technical team the ability to view (read only) all our support requirements in real time even before we log a ticket,” John expands. “This way, the delay is minimised and the response time is maximised.”

Furthermore, the school recently applied a new Servicedesk ticketing system which they plan to extract data from and better understand support trends, strengths and weaknesses.



WHAT DOES 2021 LOOK LIKE?

According to John, 2021 will be like any other year for Loreto in terms of what the school aims to achieve, which is to be better than the previous year. This is viewed in a holistic sense that encompasses teaching, learning, technology and community gratification.

On the technology front, John says the TSS department's goal is to improve their data collection and processing capabilities and gain a better understanding and utilisation of this information, which, in turn, will enhance technology and learning integration at the school.

“To summarise, our ongoing projects have been about improving data collection and effectively translating this data into information that can help guide us to improve satisfaction among our staff, students and their families.”