

Future-Proof

The Compubits Group Newsletter

One-Stop IT Solutions

The most important thing Compubits provided for Roundwood Primary School, says School Administrator Eileen Irvine, "is nothing to do with IT specifications.

"It's dealing with a flexible, helpful, one-stop solution provider," she claims.

In just four days during October, Compubits supplied 10 new laptops and 17 new desktop PCs, upgraded and optimised 15 existing school computers which it then moved between two sites at the school and into a new IT suite it had built to the schools' specification.

Like all IT suites, the Roundwood Primary installation needed desks, networking, electrics and network points, servers, printers, cabling and wireless access – all provided by Compubits.

"Because of the way that schools operate nowadays," continues Eileen, "I have to get at least three quotes for all school improvement projects if I possibly can.

"That means three quotes for the new computers, three quotes for the PC upgrades, the cabling, the servers, the desks and so on.

"Dealing with just one project manager from one supplier, who took the time to really understand what was important to us and helped us achieve the best possible value, was a real benefit.

"Compubits probably saved me weeks of solid administrative work, as well as recommending cost-saving solutions on the PCs and software.

"I recommend Compubits as an IT equipment supplier, IT maintenance provider and a one-stop solution provider for IT needs whenever I'm asked," she concludes.

Compubits project manager Sanjiv Tanda adds: "We've been maintaining IT equipment on the Roundwood Primary sites for about 10 years, but, as with all clients, we wanted to take the time to really understand what they needed to achieve with their IT before proposing a future-proofed solution that saved them money.

"Perversely," concludes Tanda, "the fact that you can do almost anything with computers nowadays, coupled to the fact that the technology is developing so quickly, often means that machines are over-specified – and that's not always the best way to economise."

Roundwood Primary School, Buckinghamshire, was founded in 2007 following the merger of Tingewick Infants and Gawcott Infants. It has 159 pupils over two sites, which are about 2 miles apart. The new IT suite is part of a continuing programme of improvements which has been in place since the merger.



The Roundwood team: Headteacher Carole Chandler (left), Administrator Eileen Irvine (right) and, for Compubits, Sanjiv Tanda (centre).



IT products, service and support

Software development, maintenance and customisation

Working with business, educators and individuals since 1992

Compubits: making IT work for you

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Do you Really Need New Computers?

Is your laptop begging for help?



Upgrade computer memory for more speed.



Sometimes it makes sense to buy new.

But not always.

"All too often machines are scrapped because they are slow," says Compubits director Pankaj Patel.

"So the first things I ask clients are *why* they want a new machine and *what* they are going to do with it.

"All too often the requirements haven't changed since the computer was originally purchased. And in that

case we can usually fix the problem often at a fraction of the cost of a replacement machine.

"It doesn't matter if it's a private use home computer or a corporate IT suite, the principle is still the same:

"Get the best value for money you possibly can from your initial investment."

Top Tips

- Check your computer(s) are bug-free
- Check your software is up to date
- Defragment at least once every six months
- Upgrade the memory for more speed
- Upgrade the hard disk for more space
- Use an external hard drive for large items you don't access every day

"It may not be exciting, but getting the cabling right is one of the keys to future-proofing an IT installation."

Cabling— Key to the Future

Nobody pretends that cabling is the most exciting subject in IT.

But, says Compubits sales manager Minesh Patel: "Getting the cabling right is one of the keys to future-proofing an IT installation.

"Cabling accounts for about 10% of the cost of a new IT suite on installation and about 50% of the irritation, anxiety and Health and Safety risk if you make patch-and-go upgrades."

Compubits always

recommends at least an additional 50% of cabling points in a new installation, sufficient slack in the cables to allow for point movement and 5-6 power points per cable point.

Intelligent Savings

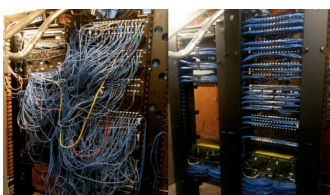
"And there are ways to make intelligent savings," adds Minesh.

"The new segregated Cat 6 cables, for example, may cost about 20% more per meter, but they can carry four sets of information

simultaneously. So you're only using the one cable for voice, data, video and whatever else.

"Which leads to savings in trays, trunking, patch panels, switches, cabinets, power and so on.

It also means your installation is better future-proofed."



Efficient cabling (right) leads to savings.

Are **You** a Teacher?

Compubits is currently surveying teachers to find out what they think on a range of lifestyle issues.

The results will be published at the end of this month (December).

"We thought it was time we knew how teachers really felt about more

than whiteboards, projectors, computers, cabling, maintenance contracts and software reporting systems," explains Compubits director Pankaj Patel.

To have your say, please visit the main SRS page on compubits.com

(compubits.com/education-school-reporting.php)

One randomly selected lucky survey participant will receive a free 8GB iPod nano in time for the New Year celebrations!





From Idea to Installation—SRS Software

It's not often that you can trace a product from inception to roll-out. But, with SRS, Compubits' new school reporting system, Future-Proof does just that:

"It's a rare privilege in business to have an idea and be able to see it become a product that can really make people's lives easier," says Compubits general manager, Manjeet Panesar.

He's quick to add that there's also a huge amount of hard work, synchronicity and teamwork in the process.

Idea

"My wife, who's a primary school teacher, was spending days of heartache wrestling with spreadsheets when tracking and reporting on pupil progress at school," says Manjeet. "I'm a software engineer, and thought that there must be something I could do to help."

"I mentioned the problem to a colleague, who also happened to be married to a teacher. He'd already developed something for his wife using Microsoft Access, but that it wasn't an ideal solution.

"At that point, we began to suspect that all teachers needed help tracking and reporting on pupil progress."

Development

Dhaval Barot, Compubits' software development project manager, takes up the story.

"Relevant solutions," he says, "are usually the key to successful products. So, as Manjeet was researching ever deeper into what was required by teachers, the Government and Ofsted, as well as practical matters such as how and when IT was used in schools, the development team here in Gujarat (India) began to develop solutions.

"We wanted to know exactly what teachers needed," he says, "before we could even begin to develop a product which would help."

"We were all determined to create something that was user-friendly and

focussed directly on providing real, teacher-relevant, benefits.

"What we most definitely did not want to do was develop something that was so complicated, and tried to do so much, that it ended up making life more difficult," adds Dhaval.

The key development team leaders working with Dhaval on SRS were associate technical leader Chintan Shah, database administrator Jigar Thakore and testing lead Minakshi Patel.

"At its heart, SRS is a database which holds a vast amount of data on student progress, which it displays and updates in an easy to understand way according to a flexible set of rules," explains Dhaval. "So the database development and testing phases were, and still are, vital."

In all, development lasted close to 18 months and resulted in three core School Reporting Systems: SRS : Foundation (for EYFS), SRS : Primary (for KS 1&2) and SRS : Secondary (for KS 2&3).

"But like all great ideas," says Dhaval, "software is never truly completed. It's just released into the world when it's ready."

Implementation

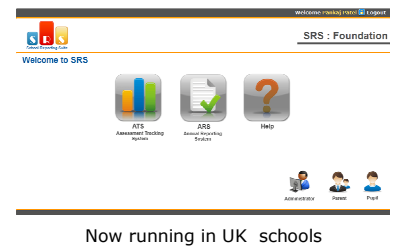
Today, SRS products are beginning to be rolled out into UK schools. Hosted on Compubits' secure servers and accessed 24/7 over the internet, SRS is beginning to make life easier for teachers.

Just as Manjeet had hoped, a little under two years ago.

"We've had terrific feedback," he says.

"Teacher's really seem to appreciate that we have developed something that is easy to use, responsive to their needs and regularly updated as requirements change".

More details on the SRS family of products, including a free online trial, are available on compubits.com.



Try the free online demo to experience SRS for yourself.

Contact Philip Jarman (philip@compubits.com) for a username and password.

SRS—a new dawn for teachers



Compubits delivers products, tailor-made IT-based solutions and services to homes, educational establishments and businesses, ensuring every client gets exactly what they need, when they need it.

Compubits develops software for specific applications, recommends, installs and supports bespoke systems and stocks thousands of products, from laptops to storage devices, games and whiteboards, for next-day delivery.

The Compubits Group was established in 1992. Headquartered in Southall, west London, Compubits has offices in Inverness and Gujarat, India, and 30 employees, approximately two thirds of which are software engineers.

The Compubits Group is a Microsoft Certified Partner.

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For general enquiries about Compubits Group products and services please contact sales manager Minesh Patel on 020 8893 5555.



Compubits: always looking out for customers

The Compubits Approach

At Compubits, delivering the products and services clients need, when they need them, is more important than appearances.

We have suits and ties, but prefer to work in a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere that encourages sharing ideas and pooling resources.

We're a team, always looking to find the best solutions for our clients, and we value honesty, hard-work, definable skill-sets and flexibility.

Above all, we're the sort of people who like to share ideas that make IT work for our clients.

So if you have questions about getting the best out of your IT investment, queries about new IT

developments or problems which you think IT could help you solve, please get in touch.

We're here to help.

It doesn't matter how big or small the project, Compubits prides itself in providing an outstanding service for customers, from private individuals to multi-national corporations.

