IBM

Business challenge

Zurich International School (ZIS) is moving! How could the school transition without disrupting life for today's staff and students, and build tomorrow's network for education and innovation?

Transformation

By teaming with IBM, ZIS gains deeper knowledge and greater access to innovative, cost-effective and reliable Cisco solutions, based on strategic advice and consultancy delivered by IBM® Services™.

Business benefits:

Increased
IT efficiency

Reliable, secure
network for more than 1,200 students

Enhanced services
even during complex campus relocation

Zurich International School

Delivers educational excellence built on innovative network capabilities

Zurich International School (ZIS) comprises three campuses with more than 1,200 students and some 280 staff. Around 55 nationalities and 40 mother-tongue languages are represented in the school community. ZIS is the oldest accredited school in the Zurich area, and is registered as a non-profit organization in Switzerland.

"IBM Services brings its experience to the table to identify solutions that greatly reduce our IT workload."

Jonathan Uglow
IT Operations Administrator
Zurich International School

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Gearing up for a bright future

Not-for-profit Zurich International School (ZIS) offers state-of-the-art education, and has been recognized for its innovative technology use alongside its traditional pastoral and academic excellence. From digital whiteboards to social media, today's students and staff expect to communicate, search, and research at any time, using always-on network availability, everywhere.

At ZIS, with some 1,200 students and over 280 staff, providing reliable, secure connectivity is essential. The school gives each lower-school student an iPad, and middle- and upper-school students receive Lenovo notebooks – and of course the school uses electronic whiteboards, printers, phones and much more. Typically, over 1,000 devices are simultaneously connected to the network.

Located at three campuses, the school is building a new Middle School to open in 2022 which will mean all students are based at purpose-built facilities. The move offers an opportunity to refresh critical network infrastructure and create enhanced capabilities for the future.

Jonathan Uglow, IT Operations Administrator, elaborates: "Our IT infrastructure must be secure, GDPR compliant (which encompasses security, data security, safeguarding and more) and reliable at all times, to ensure the

students and staff can always connect. With a mixture of older devices in multiple locations, we are looking to modernize and standardize our systems, adopting and managing new technologies while maintaining control."

He continues, "With a relatively small three-person IT team, making the right future network choices presents a significant challenge, especially when we have to manage the school's existing technical infrastructure at the same time."

"Working with IBM Services enables us to control our capital expenditure by optimizing price-performance choices."

Jonathan Uglow, IT Operations Administrator, Zurich International School

Selecting trusted advisors

ZIS has worked with Cisco and IBM for many years, gaining deeper knowledge and greater access to innovative, cost-effective and reliable Cisco solutions, based on strategic advice and consultancy delivered by IBM Services. The school has chosen to build its entire network infrastructure using Cisco components and solutions, from large managed switches to wireless access points throughout the campuses. This provides a reliable, high-capacity system that is easy to manage, and that can support new capabilities as technology evolves.

IBM Services delivers consultancy and advice, aiming to help ZIS use existing technology to its full potential,

implementing switches and the wireless infrastructure, and assisting with the design and implementation of the future-state network at the new buildings.

Jonathan Uglow comments, "The Cisco networking equipment and solutions give ZIS the widest possible choice to meet our specific situations. Ensuring that we have highly reliable network infrastructure is exceptionally important to the school, and the Cisco product quality ensures we are able to meet our service commitments to students and staff."

He continues, "IBM Services acts as our trusted advisor, guiding us through current and future technologies and helping us select the best possible Cisco solutions. The technical strength of IBM Services, with global resources to draw on if necessary, helps us select the most effective equipment without over-specifying, and negotiate very competitive prices to help us maximize our available budget."

"Cisco offers a tremendous variety of quality products, and the strategic partnership with IBM clearly shows up in the reliability of our network and the long-term business relationship with ZIS."

Jonathan Uglow, IT Operations Administrator, Zurich International School

Rising to any challenge

ZIS, IBM and Cisco continue to work collaboratively to ensure that the network meets the school's needs, with a flexible, scalable environment that can handle tomorrow's – often unexpected – challenges.

Jonathan Uglow comments, "As we speak at the start of 2020, to protect against COVID-19 transmission the school has transitioned to online and distance learning, highlighting the importance of reliability, security and – unexpectedly – agility. Previously students and staff were within the campus on the same highly controlled local area network, whereas now the majority are connecting externally. With advice from IBM Services, in a short space of time we have enhanced our networks, demonstrating the flexible capability of the Cisco solutions."

Even as the world reconfigures itself during the COVID-19 outbreak, work on the networks for the new building

continues apace. With more than 1,000 concurrent devices, from finance and HR to the newest lower-school admission, reliability is essential.

And ZIS is feeling the commercial heat, too, as economies are contracting. In recent years, the IT team has reduced from five to four people, and yet continues to manage the existing and expanding network, as well as the transition to the new buildings.

"Working with IBM Services enables us to control our capital expenditure by optimizing price-performance choices," says Jonathan Uglow. "Though we would find it difficult to review all the

available options, IBM Services brings its experience to the table to identify solutions that greatly reduce our IT workload. As a team we constantly review the impact of tomorrow's technologies – next-generation smartphones, WiFi6 and more – while we plan for a smooth transition to our new location."

Jonathan Uglow concludes, "Cisco offers a tremendous variety of quality products, and the strategic partnership with IBM clearly shows up in the reliability of our network and the long-term business relationship with ZIS."

Solution components

- IBM Services™
- IBM® Network Consulting Services
- Cisco

Take the next step

To learn more about IBM Services, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/services

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