

stoneware, inc.

The Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) is the third largest school district in California, serving the most diverse large city in the United States, with 46 different languages spoken by local students. The district employs more than 8,000 people, making it the largest employer in Long Beach, California.

Challenge

Teachers working in the LBUSD wanted a way to easily access information and perform daily tasks remotely, securely and all in one location. A pretty tall order considering the LBUSD educates 92,000 students in 95 public schools at over 120 locations. And with over 300 active servers and a mix of Novell NetWare 4.11, 5.1, 6.5 and Windows, finding a solution for single web presence from which all information can be accessed seemed a pretty tall order.

Like many IT departments, LBUSD has a mix of operating environments, database platforms, applications and vendors. Finding the right solution to handle this diverse environment, as well as a solution that could scale to handle their sheer size, safely, securely and easily, proved challenging.

“We spent nearly 18 months trying to do a portal project to help our teachers be more efficient remotely and were days away from scrapping the idea – thinking that the technology that we needed just didn’t exist,” indicated Matt Woods, network administrator, Long Beach Unified School District.

“Many of the vendors we spoke with about portals led us to believe we would have to redesign our systems for a portal to work,” added Woods. “While we are constantly upgrading, we needed something that would work now, not two years from now when our systems are more homogenous.”

Solution

Then Woods came across Stoneware during a last ditch Internet search. After downloading Stoneware’s product evaluation, they were sold.

“Stoneware was the only product that we were able to find that would work in our mix of Novell NetWare 4.11, 5.1 and 6.5,” explained Woods. “And, we were up and running in production within three days.”



Challenge:

- Create a way to provide teachers with easy access to information
- Integrate large Novell environment with over 300 servers and 92,000 students

Solution:

- Stoneware webNetwork
- Novell eDirectory
- Novell SuSE Linux

Results:

- Rapidly deployed directory-based teacher extranet without any development
- Remotely access home directories, databases, applications, and email
- Created new opportunities for teachers to access information without creating additional overhead

Through its suite of services, Stoneware provides directory-based web portal services for quickly deploying Intranets and extranets, enabling organizations to provide their employees and customers with a single point of access to all organization content via the web, safely, securely and personally.

Stoneware solutions are open and flexible, supporting databases, directory servers, applications, operating systems, and hardware platforms from a wide variety of vendors. Stoneware delivers unparalleled levels of performance, security, and management within the webNetwork product line. The products are designed to benefit any size organization that needs secure remote access to the information that drives their business.

LBUSD deployed the portal to four servers as part of their rollout. Two web servers (one for internal users and one for external users) are running SuSE Linux. A third NetWare 6.5 server provides LDAP directory services and file services. And a fourth server is Windows 2003 for reporting services and Terminal Services.

The portal is used extensively to tie together user access to email (GroupWise for employees and NetMail for students) along with Microsoft applications and file services through a single interface using single sign on. This allows users to seamlessly move between PCs and Macs, both at home and within the district.

“The concept behind the Stoneware’s webNetwork is to leverage all of our current investments and internal systems,” added Woods. “We wrote zero code throughout the entire process. And Stoneware was the only product we found that doesn’t require us to maintain, backup, recover or update additional databases, because the webNetwork leverages the information that is in our Novell eDir - now that’s the real power of a portal.”

Stoneware’s webNetwork is designed for ease of use, requiring little to no programming experience or development. “We don’t have a lot of resources that we can dedicate to something like this, said Woods. “What we liked about Stoneware is that when we manage the directory, which we have to do anyway, we are actually managing the portal.”

Results

Through Stoneware’s webNetwork LBUSD teachers now have an extranet that integrates a wide variety of databases, applications, file systems and servers, allowing them to remotely and securely access home directories, shared folders, email, discussion groups and more. Another advantage is they can run their Making The Grade (MTG) program, an application that tracks pupil grading, allowing them to have anywhere, anytime access giving them the freedom to do their grading, securely and remotely.

“The portal not only saves us time, but creates opportunities for us that didn’t exist before,” added Woods. “Now the teachers can access information without us, as well as change their own

password, recover passwords, update information about their account, and update database information all on their own – administrative tasks that our IT department used to have to do for them.”

“And we’ve just cut our teeth with this portal, added Woods. “Next fall we will open up the portal to our students so they can access their files, assignments, class notes and other information just as if they were sitting in their classroom – bringing our total portal users to over 100,000.”

About Stoneware:

Headquartered in Indianapolis, Stoneware is a privately held corporation providing directory-based web portal services for quickly deploying Intranets and extranets. The company services various sectors including education, manufacturing, government, medical, legal, and financial industries. Through its suite of products, Stoneware enables organizations to provide their employees and customers with a single point of access to all organization content via the web, safely, securely and personally. For more information about Stoneware and the Stoneware product line, visit www.stoneware.com, or call 888-473-9485.