



Established  
1875

Employees  
250

Vertical  
Education

Location  
Brisbane, AU

URL  
[terrace.qld.edu.au](http://terrace.qld.edu.au)

## St Joseph's College re-engineers how they manage and deliver client services with help from Technology Effect and Microsoft's Azure Cloud IAAS

*St Joseph's College faced serious challenges caused by their aged and ailing technology. When the new IT Director assumed responsibility of the technology infrastructure he discovered that failing hardware and technical complexity was causing regular loss of IT services to the College. This intermittent reliability was cascading throughout the entire system and was seriously impeding user productivity. A remediation plan and technology roadmap was formulated that addressed key limitations in systems and infrastructure. The re-engineering project completely changed the focus of how the technology team engaged with stakeholders by shifting the focus from building infrastructure and software to delivering IT services. The computing environment is now extremely resilient, easier to manage and the critical risk posed to service availability has been fully mitigated.*

### **About St Joseph's College**

Queensland education performance rankings consistently places St Joseph's College in the top 2% of high achieving secondary schools. The college is located on the fringe of Brisbane's CBD and caters to the needs of more than 1,300 year 5-12 students. The school's goals of building character and delivering scholastic achievement are balanced against a strong commitment to social justice and selfless contribution to the community. St Joseph's embraces technology at all levels as demonstrated by their practice of students providing service desk assistance to help fellow classmates tackle complex computing issues.

St Joseph's new IT Director faced a major challenge when he assumed the role. The culture he inherited was one of building and managing technology with little emphasis placed on serving the educational and administrative needs of the College. The College's infrastructure was dated and consisted of 60 servers hosting dedicated applications. Unreliable hardware was creating a huge workload for support staff, burdening them with the task of fielding more than 300 service desk calls a week. This situation posed a serious risk to business service availability. In the event of an unplanned outage, how soon could services be restored and when would full service production be back online?

To begin an infrastructure renewal program, a future roadmap was defined to align the project's goals with the IT Director's vision;

**Redirect resources:**

The College's IT culture had traditionally focussed on a DIY culture to build technology. The vision for the future was to refocus the IT personnel from technology builders to service deliverers.

**Create a more agile environment:**

Commissioning new services often required weeks, depending on the availability of hardware and the time needed to sign off expenditure approvals. Adding extra hardware increased the cost, workload and complexity of managing the IT environment.

**Reduce risk:**

The College's business operations could be crippled in the event of a natural disaster. Service availability and disaster recovery planning were vital to bringing the College's business continuity capabilities into line with industry best practice. This risk to the business had to be resolved.

**Solution**

St Joseph's re-engineering initiative began by engaging with Technology Effect's Professional Services Group to review strategy and set a 3-5 year technology roadmap that framed the school's goals. It was important that the objectives were validated and high-level Cloud expertise added to reduce any project implementation risks. Some of the College's end-of-life legacy applications had to be retained because migrating them to the Cloud made little business sense. Porting applications from the College's unreliable commodity services to the Cloud was the first deliverable, with the remaining servers used to host end-of-life applications. Microsoft's Azure Cloud was used as it met the project goals from an operational and management perspective. Naggng concerns about the business's ability to restore services in the event of a natural disaster were allayed as more services including backup where ported to the Cloud and redundant WAN links were added to the College. As part of the refresh, Technology Effect assumed responsibility for network monitoring of voice and data services and provided centralised billing to simplify accounting and service level management.

**Implementation**

The project was implemented in a methodical staged process defined by the detailed planning sessions held with the professional services team from Technology Effect. Because of the College's use of Active Directory, student and staff migration, user security and authentication procedures were simplified during the transitional phase of the project.

**Facts**

- IT staff now focus on providing services that are customer focussed
- Infrastructure resilience has been improved **reducing support calls by 80%**
- Employee **productivity has been increased** thanks to higher system performance and service availability
- New services can be commissioned in a fraction of the time previously needed, **increasing the organisation's agility**

## Results

By measuring the outcomes against the project goals, the re-engineering project has built a resilient and agile environment. The time required to spin-up a new server in the cloud is now only a few hours and the number of support calls has declined by 80%. Productivity has improved while the headcount in the IT group has fallen by 20%, with no adverse effect on service delivery. Prior to the project, the team consisted of subject matter experts who were responsible for silos of technology. The school's technology team have broadened their skills and are more adaptable: this is a complete change from the previous culture. Even simple changes like providing a single point of support contact and simplified accounting have improved processes and reduced operating costs.

## Summary

- Support calls have been reduced by **80%** because procedures and technology have been improved
- The IT team has been revamped and **skills redirected** to focus on outcomes, not technology
- The **productivity** of the IT department has been **improved** while staff numbers have decreased
- By creating a **robust and agile IT** environment the College can restore business services quickly and meet the goals of their business continuity planning

## Conclusions

St Joseph's IT Director Brett Auton had a clear vision of how to build a resilient infrastructure based on open standards and off-the-shelf solutions. The challenge of refreshing infrastructure supporting more than 1,300 users was daunting and came with the constant risk of causing interruption to the College's daily business operations. Careful planning and close collaboration with Technology Effect's professional services team ensured that realistic expectations were set and timelines met. The project has been heralded as a complete success and the project has delivered the outcomes that the school's executives wanted. The project's clearly defined goal of enabling better services for stakeholders has been achieved and the positive outcome bodes well for the College's future.

## Services and Products

Consulting and High Level Design 

Office 365 Cloud Productivity Applications 

Cloud Services 

Azure Cloud Infrastructure 

Federated Identity Integrated with Active Directory 

Managed Network & Data Links with SIP 

## Client Quotes

Our technology transformation required vision and high levels of cloud expertise. Our partner Technology Effect helped us deliver on the high expectations we set.

Brett Auton  
Director - IT  
St Joseph's College