School of the future gives time back to teachers through power right to the edge

Location: QLD, Australia

Segment: Education

"Power quality is an area we feel is critical in any environment especially in education, where digital learning technologies are so prevalent that teaching staff and students cannot afford any disruption."

Opened in 1997, Coomera Anglican College has become one of South East Queensland's most progressive educational institutions. Built on a vision to inspire excellence in teaching and learning, the P-12 College has operated with one eye firmly on the future.

Teachers utilise technology to support student learning both in technology-related subjects and to enhance engagement across traditional subjects. All classrooms are fitted with large, high-resolution, interactive audio-visual displays – while students use a range of general computing devices including laptops, iPads, desktops and wall-mounted touch screen devices.

Teachers are also supported by modern technology infrastructure and specialised technologies such as robots, digital project kits, augmented reality equipment and The Pod – a unique primary school building enriching the learning experience by immersing students in a 360-degree image projection space called the Imaginarium

Modernising IT infrastructure

The College's IT infrastructure was under pressure, two years behind where it needed to be and on the verge of costly downtime. The College's IT team conducted an audit to identify system weaknesses to help bring infrastructure up to speed.

The team discovered the College's connectivity was at risk from power quality vulnerabilities. Existing equipment was being hosted in a small room, which used to serve as an office. The environmental conditions were not optimal – with the room being cooled by an aging split system air conditioning unit.

While the College had not experienced any significant IT issues, there was an increasing risk to critical systems, including data servers and internet. Any failure or disruption would have a significant impact to the 1,500 students and over 200 staff who rely on the College's IT infrastructure.

With ambitious technology plans for the future, the core focus of the IT team was to modernise IT infrastructure – ensuring a seamless classroom experience and increasing the ability to manage IT remotely.

Inspiring excellence in IT

IT partner Panther Data, an IT services provider reached out to the College to discuss the need for a new Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) to back-up critical systems. A series of site visits and hardware audits revealed that the College needed a reliable system that would align with its sustainability and energy efficiency plans.

The chosen UPS needed to provide clean power to servers in a blackout, allow enough time to back-up files and shut down equipment during extended outages.

Maritsa Pavone, Business Development Manager at Panther Data said a decision was made to propose Eaton's range of solutions, which were the right fit for the College.

"Thanks to their unique and innovative power management solutions, local support and distribution channel, we felt Eaton was the ideal specialist to help Coomera Anglican College mitigate the risk of power quality issues," said Maritsa.

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The conversation soon evolved from traditional UPS to other ways Panther Data and Eaton could help the College conserve power. With IT infrastructure hosted in suboptimal conditions, Eaton designed a fully integrated Micro Data Centre solution to enhance physical security and provide robust environmental controls. With in-built air conditioning, the system could be remotely managed, isolate individual power supplies and provide issue alerts and warning – making it the perfect fit to solve underlying issues whilst maximising network up-time.

Darryl Hall, IT Services Manager at Coomera Anglican College said the College has a clear purpose to inspire excellence in teaching, learning, service and faith.

"It's very refreshing to work with a company like Eaton who aren't just selling you a product. They evaluated and listened to our IT needs, invited us to their Brisbane experience centre for a live demonstration that showcased how the solution worked, and the quality and security benefits," said Darryl.

"The Micro Data Centre is a unique product that you don't see much in the education space but through this hands-on demonstration we could see its full value and how it would help us achieve cost savings by optimising our air-conditioning alone."

Before finalising its decision, the College looked into competitor offerings and how they stacked up against the Eaton solution.

"Our decision came down to service, functionality and knowing we would have a strong support system through Eaton," added Darryl.

Future-proofing education

With over 1,000 personal devices on campus, the College has future proofed its IT infrastructure to offer a seamless educational experience for both students and teachers.

"By installing Eaton's Micro Data Centre and UPS we are giving time back to teachers to spend with students and not worrying about the technology working – it's set and forget.

"It's one less thing to worry about, our IT resources no longer need to be assigned to monitor environmental conditions, instead they can be allocated to classrooms to help the College achieve its technology goals."

Over the next year Coomera Anglican College is looking at ways to innovate and enhance the education experience further – with plans currently underway for a secondary future focused equivalent to, The Pod. Technology and innovation are key elements of the project, which will build on the immersive learning investment made in the Imaginarium.

"Ultimately, Eaton has given us peace of mind thanks to ongoing annual maintenance and health checks. As we look to continue being a forward-thinking school Eaton is our number one technology choice for UPS solutions including the Micro Data Centre," said Darryl.

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