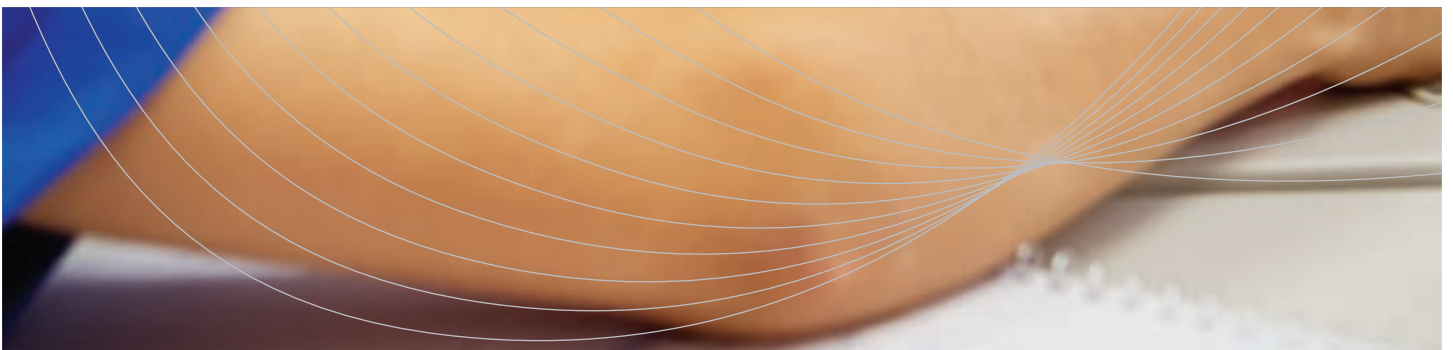




HP ProCurve Networking
Abbotsford School District 34—Deploying
Wireless to Improve Learning



The city of Abbotsford is located in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia, just one hour from Vancouver and 15 minutes from the U.S. border. The public school system enrolls 19,300 students and has approximately 2,500 staff members, ranking it in the top 15% of public school systems in Canada in terms of size.

The district has 51 school buildings, including 30 elementary schools, eight middle schools, eight secondary schools, a distance learning site, the Aboriginal Education Centre, and three administration buildings. The school system consistently ranks among the highest academic performers in British Columbia and annually ranks in the top 10 in athletics and art events.

Abbotsford School District 34 is continually looking for ways to use new technologies to help its teachers and administrators work more efficiently. To that end, it wanted to implement a wireless network for its schools to give teachers and administrators a powerful new infrastructure for improving the quality of education.

OBJECTIVE

Previous Wireless Technology Failed the Test

Over the past several years, Abbotsford School District 34 has been investing in technology and in using computers in the classroom. In particular, one of the district's high schools, the Abbotsford Traditional Secondary School, caters to students particularly interested in technology.

“We have a lot of new teachers who come out of university with an extensive technology background, so we’re quickly upgrading our technology to give them the tools to use that knowledge for learning. With Colubris*, we have a wireless infrastructure in place from which to build on and deploy productivity-boosting applications—now and in the future.” Leighton Lefavre, Manager of Information Systems, Abbotsford School District 34

In the Abbotsford Traditional Secondary School, all students are required to purchase laptops and conduct nearly all of their coursework using the computer. To better facilitate communication, the school district wanted to implement a wireless network so teachers and students could access the intranet and send class assignments to each other via e-mail. In addition, the school district wanted to install wireless access points at its other schools so staff members could connect to the network for e-mail and Web access.

Prior to implementing HP ProCurve*, Abbotsford School District 34 used a variety of wireless access points from vendors including Apple, Linksys, Proxim, and D-Link. However, all of these access points provided spotty coverage and didn't work well with the variety of computer operating platforms brought to school by students.

“We needed a solution that was more stable and didn't require the high level of management that these products required,” said Leighton Lefavre, manager of information systems of Abbotsford School District 34. “We wanted to standardize all of our schools on one solution that would enable easy upgrades and could be centrally controlled.”

Abbotsford School District 34 worked with a value-added reseller based in Burnaby, British Columbia, to identify a new wireless solution. After evaluating several competing solutions, the reseller recommended that the school district test equipment from HP ProCurve.

* The products referred to in this publication were developed and sold by Colubris Networks Inc, which was acquired by HP ProCurve in 2008. References to HP ProCurve herein refer only to Colubris Networks Inc. or those products acquired from Colubris Networks and not the HP ProCurve product line generally.

HP ProCurve WLAN Equipment Earned an A+

Abbotsford School District 34 started a pilot of HP ProCurve wireless LAN (WLAN) solutions in January 2006 in the Abbotsford Traditional Secondary School. Lefavre said the HP ProCurve equipment provided exceptional wireless access during the two-month pilot and worked so well that the school wouldn't let the IT department take it out after the pilot was over.

"The school district actually didn't have the budget for new wireless equipment until July when the new school year began," said Lefavre. "But the difference in reliable wireless access was so noticeable once we installed Colubris* that we found a way to keep it installed through the end of the school year."

Following the successful pilot at the Abbotsford Traditional Secondary School, Abbotsford School District 34 made HP ProCurve equipment the standard for wireless products throughout the district. The school district purchased 80 HP ProCurve MultiService Access Points for use inside more than a quarter of its schools, as well as a HP ProCurve MultiService Controller, which is installed in the administration building and provides centralized management of the access points.

The HP ProCurve MultiService Access Points provide fast handoff and roaming capabilities so users' wireless connections are never dropped, no matter where they go in the school. Lefavre said these capabilities are essential so that students do not need to log back on each time they change classrooms.

With HP ProCurve solutions, Abbotsford School District 34 is also able to provide guest access within its schools, so teachers can always log on to the network even if they are visiting another school or administration building in the district.

By buying HP ProCurve equipment, Abbotsford School District 34 is able to grow its wireless network in stages, rather than making a large equipment investment right away. This fits in with Abbotsford's budget and allows it to add schools to the wireless network as they require network access. Lefavre said all 51 buildings should have wireless access in the next two to three years.

"We are seeing a huge increase in the number of teachers who are using wireless technology in the classroom. For example, teachers are using Tablet PCs to connect to wireless projectors and laptops to connect to SMART Boards, which are interactive whiteboards," said Lefavre. "By deploying Colubris* equipment throughout our school system, we can ensure that teachers will have continuous and reliable wireless access so they can benefit from these technologies."

In addition to getting all schools outfitted with wireless access, over the next few years Abbotsford School District 34 is also planning to expand its use of HP ProCurve technology. Lefavre said he is looking into deploying the HP ProCurve RF Manager, a wireless intrusion prevention system that can detect rogue access points and shut them down, as well as the HP ProCurve RF Planner to map access points and ensure blanket wireless coverage. Lefavre is also looking into replacing the old phone system with Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), which can be deployed using the HP ProCurve solution.

About HP ProCurve mobility

HP ProCurve is a leading global provider of intelligent wireless networks (WLANs) for enterprises and service providers. Based on the industry's first optimized WLAN switch architecture, HP ProCurve systems combine centralized management with intelligent access points to deliver superior performance, bandwidth efficiency, seamless mobility, and secure, easy user access.

More than 40 million users and 1,500 organizations across the healthcare, manufacturing, education, hospitality, service provider, and transportation sectors rely on HP ProCurve wireless solutions. HP ProCurve provides mobile access to business-critical applications, guest/public Internet access, VoWLAN and FMC services, and video surveillance, delivering premier performance, scalability, and price to organizations worldwide.

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