



Partner: Scholaris International
Web Site: www.scholarisintl.com
Country or Region: Australia
Industry: Education—Primary and secondary schools

Partner Profile

With offices and partners on four continents, Scholaris International provides solutions to K-12 schools to enhance teaching and learning, communication and collaboration, and information management.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Office
 - Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007

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Schools Enrich Learning Experiences, Improve Communication with Web-Based Gateway

“Now teachers with minimal IT expertise are able to quickly develop rich student collaboration opportunities that are engaging and interactive.”

Justin Cantrill, United Kingdom General Manager, Scholaris International

Scholaris Learning Gateway is a Web-based learning solution used by schools and colleges across four continents. Based on the Microsoft® Learning Gateway framework, Scholaris Learning Gateway helps teachers offer their students rich learning experiences. The solution also streamlines information management, and it strengthens communication and collaboration among students, teachers, parents, and administrators.

Business Needs

Scholaris International focuses on designing, developing, and distributing innovative educational solutions that use technology to enhance teaching and learning and that streamline administrative tasks. Scholaris Learning Gateway has been deployed to K-12 schools in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Singapore; the company plans to expand deployment to other countries in the near future. Scholaris distributes its software through a community of regional partners that provide local support, sales, and deployment.

In 2004, the company recognized that schools needed an integrated solution to help them meet the educational challenges of the 21st century. For example,

administrators and teachers must manage, analyze, and act upon increasing amounts of information that is presented in a variety of software applications. Additionally, teachers need easy access to tools and resources that help them provide students with rich learning environments and individualized curricula. Scholaris also recognized that it is important for parents to access their children's records, including homework and exams, so they can be proactively involved in their student's progress. Finally, Scholaris knew that communication among students, teachers, parents, and administrators is an important factor leading to student success.

Scholaris wanted a solution that enhances learning opportunities, streamlines educational administrative tasks, and



connects all members of the learning community. The company wanted to consolidate all capabilities in a single solution that required a single logon by users.

Solution

Scholaris considered building its own framework for a new solution called Scholaris Learning Gateway. However, the company chose the Microsoft® Learning Gateway framework because it integrates knowledge management, collaboration, and communications technologies, and it integrates with a range of third-party and Microsoft products in an easy-to-use solution.

The Microsoft Learning Gateway uses Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007 for the base portal layer. Relevant Web Parts from any vendor can be added to individualize the solution. Additionally, technologies such as Microsoft Exchange Server, Microsoft SQL Server® data management software, Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007, Microsoft Internet Security and Acceleration Server, and Microsoft Office 2007 suites can be used to deliver education-centric functionality. With the Microsoft Learning Gateway, Scholaris can customize the Scholaris Learning Gateway for each educational partner by selecting different software components. Because the framework integrates with infrastructure already in use, schools and school districts do not need to retire or upgrade existing Microsoft software.

Benefits

With Microsoft software and Scholaris Learning Gateway, schools can gain the following benefits:

- **Enhanced virtual learning environment.** By using the Microsoft Learning Gateway and Office SharePoint Server 2007 as the

foundation for Scholaris Learning Gateway, teachers now have many tools to deliver curriculum tailored to meet the individual needs of students. Teachers now can manage the creation, management, and tracking of curriculum and student performance. They also can use an activities builder, perform ongoing assessments of a student or class, and access the assignment manager to monitor interaction with students.

“From the feedback we’ve had, we know teachers are looking for ways to easily put content online to enrich their classrooms,” says Justin Cantrill, Scholaris General Manager in the United Kingdom. With Scholaris Learning Gateway, teachers can easily search for relevant content, activities, and assignments. They then can manage the delivery of the assignments. Students complete the assignments, are assessed online, and have the assignments returned electronically.

- **Streamlined information management.**

With a single logon to Scholaris Learning Gateway, teachers, students, and administrators are able to manage the important documents, forms, and resources that reside on various network drives at their schools. Parents also can log on to their own workspaces, where they can review their children’s academic results and assignments as well as access newsletters and forms.

- **Enriched communication and**

collaboration. Scholaris Learning Gateway provides networking opportunities that enhance the educational process for students, teachers, parents, and school administrators. Some schools have used the Office SharePoint Server 2007 intranet functionality to customize and

maintain branding within the school’s portal. Others have maximized the unified interface to provide learning community access to newsletters, announcements, and blogs. Still others have found that teachers appreciate the collaboration functionality as they monitor and improve curricula. Additionally, the solution improves communication with all members of the learning community, who can easily send e-mail messages to one another without leaving the portal.

The solution also encourages innovative communication. “In West Vancouver, Canada, we use the functionality that exists in Office SharePoint Server 2007 to provide blogs, wikis, and discussion boards, which are complex technologies,” says Gary Kern, Scholaris General Manager in Canada. “Scholaris makes those applications accessible for teachers, and that really is the entry point from a district perspective. Without Office SharePoint Server 2007, it would have been extremely difficult to provide these social networking tools.”

- **Increased usability and adoption.**

Scholaris Learning Gateway has empowered teachers who in the past were reluctant to try teaching in a virtual classroom. “Now teachers with minimal IT expertise are able to quickly develop rich student collaboration opportunities that are engaging and interactive,” explains Cantrill. For example, of 500 teachers in a West Vancouver school, about 50 were technologically proficient before Scholaris Learning Gateway, Kern says. “Now about 80 percent of the teachers are able to access the technology simply by using the Scholaris applications. The teachers like it so much that they are finding new ways to use the software to enhance learning.”