

MGfL New Service Update

(Version 1.00 - 27/04/2006)



Introduction

Several new services have been or are being introduced and made available to schools. An update on each of these follows.

Video Conferencing

The Breeze Video Conferencing system has been commissioned and was released to all secondary schools for testing at the end of March. This appears to have gone well with several schools having successfully setup conferences. The Breeze service will be released to all schools in the near future, seminars run as an introduction to using the service and local documentation generated to support the service.

RM Easylink

RM Easylink remains available to all school upon request. We do not recommend this service due to security considerations and when installed it comes with certain restrictions on the use of Grid services (e.g. the ability, normally available to everyone, to choose a filtering policy on a per machine basis) which are in place to protect other Grid users.

Discussion with RM has unfortunately not been particularly fruitful. Although RM have implemented changes to Easylink to address similar security concerns in other parts of the country they are for commercial reasons not willing to do so here. The reason for this in part is that a replacement product is being developed which will address the security issues, although we could not obtain a timescale for the release of this product.

In the meantime we continue to investigate alternative technical arrangements which could be put in place to allow the unrestricted use of all Grid services at the same time as Easylink and an independent review and risk assessment of the security issues surrounding Easylink has been commissioned.

Sercu CMIS eportal

CMIS eportal has been installed and is working. The server platforms needed to support the CMIS eportal installations for schools which chose this as their first preference and also installed and we are currently working with those schools to place the web view of their database on the Internet.

Moodle

Although Moodle is working for one secondary school investigation of the load placed on the hardware by Moodle required new hardware to be ordered. Due to the large volume of interest in Moodle it required enterprise scale servers and storage which have a reasonable long lead time. All the hardware is now delivered and awaiting commissioning engineers who are due to attend next week. Following this there will be a server setup and configuration phase estimated to take 2 weeks.

VPN

The VPN service continues to be available to all schools and facilitates the widest range of services on any solution. We now have a substantial stock of the RSA two factor authentication tokens and we believe we have fulfilled all outstanding orders. Anyone still waiting for tokens should email noc@medway.gov.uk