



 Connecting
 the Dots

Linking up more than 1,000 schools in Hong Kong SAR

CUSTOMER

- Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB), Government of HKSAR

CHALLENGES

- Provide Integrated Management System
- Enable Ease of Use
- Increase Efficiency
- Minimise Systems maintenance cost
- User-friendly System

SOLUTIONS

- A highly-integrated Web-based Administration and Management System (WebSAMS)
- Network System Integration
- Open source concept
- Providing WebSAMS training to users

BENEFITS

- Convenient Platform
- Higher Efficiency
- Data Accuracy
- Lower Cost

Answering the Needs for Advancement ■ The Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) is the governing body responsible for the formulation of policies and the introduction of legislation to ensure quality education and effective use of resources in HKSAR. EMB also oversees the implementation of programmes that are designed to bring these objectives to fruition.

EMB identified the need to upgrade their old School Administration and Management System (SAMS). In a targeted users study completed in 1999, SAMS, which had been developed using client-server technology, proved to be obsolete, costly and inefficient - it also required additional functionality to satisfy users both from the schools as well as the education administration.

In August 2001, NCS Group won the project to design and develop an integrated Web-based School Administration and Management System (WebSAMS).

WebSAMS uses web-based technology to convert and integrate existing SAMS and School Communication Delivery Systems. To date, more than 1,000 public-funded primary and secondary schools have linked to and benefited from WebSAMS.

The targeted users of the system range from education professionals to students and their parents. They can now rely on a new secure system offering more functionality, higher efficiency, transparency and accurate data updates, at their convenience via the Internet.

Challenges ■

Efficiency Challenge - The old system was developed on client-server technology with much limitation on system usage, users' accessibility, users' support and data integration with third party software. All these limitations proved to be taxing and restrictive for the users and affected overall efficiency.

Complexity Challenge - On top of the SAMS system obsolescence, the targeted implementation and rollout of WebSAMS to more than 1,000 schools, within the stipulated timeline, posed a new set of issues. Each school had its unique user requirements and there was also a wide range of technology maturity and adoption between the schools. The diverse network configurations and non-standardisation amongst the schools increased rollout complexity.

Change Management Challenge - To align more than 1,000 schools with the vision and direction of WebSAMS and to prepare the mindset of school users to adopt WebSAMS (in terms of new business processes and new technology) was no mean task.

NCS Solution - WebSAMS ■

The comprehensive web-based School Administration and Management System (WebSAMS) is now in place in HKSAR.

“I am pleased to inform you that the organisation of the six technical seminars on WebSAMS have been completed and were on the whole well received by attendees. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to NCS staff for the assistance and co-ordination work in delivering clear and informative presentations. Last, but not least, thanks to NCS Group's support.”

- Winnie Ho, EO(SIM)5, Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB)

WebSAMS utilises a full open-source concept and web technology to efficiently integrate the existing system configuration in schools and EMB. The integrated system has the major benefit of reducing future upgrading deployment time and effort by enabling EMB to upgrade any programme only once at the EMB server. This allows each school to subsequently download the upgraded version via the Internet.

Key Benefits ■

Improved Efficiency - WebSAMS enables teachers to access the system, at their convenience, via the Internet. Students and their parents who are assigned access rights can interact with their schools at their convenience too. WebSAMS provides an efficient platform for all targeted users.

Compatibility of System - WebSAMS aims to provide compatibility for all future applications irrespective of the provider. It is now a convenient platform for software developers to promote and develop add-on school administrative software; thus providing schools with easier access to more software, without the need to worry about compatibility issues.

Enhanced Functionality - Since system implementation, all stakeholders (including school users, guardians, parents and students) are now granted access to navigate the user-friendly WebSAMS securely, anytime, anywhere.

The flexible and comprehensive applications are responsive to support new or re-engineered business and administrative processes. The open and reliable technology architecture enables effective data communication between EMB and schools and automatic distribution and upgrade of application software modules.

As a result of proper implementation, training and management, the system is now widely embraced by the target users.

The implementation of WebSAMS not only achieved the government's vision of exploiting enabling technologies, EMB had the foresight to make it a 'caring' system. Today, Hong Kong parents can enquire about their children's performance and well-being through WebSAMS, anytime, anywhere.

Contact NCS Group today!

As the region's leading IT and communication engineering solutions provider, NCS Group aims to work closely with customers to create business value through the innovative use of IT. With proven experience and expertise in consulting, development, integration and managed services, we bring end-to-end support for your organisation's entire technology life cycle. For more information, please visit www.ncs.com.sg.