

InTechnology Plc.

Training in a revolutionary new way with Symantec Education Services' Virtual Academy

InTechnology Plc. values training opportunities for its staff so they can stay up-to-date on new technologies to offer their clients, however, the average staff member spends 15 man-days per year away from the office on training, a cost-expensive endeavor. InTechnology turned to Symantec Education Services for its Virtual Academy, where employees can participate as individuals or teams in live webcasts, self-paced tutorials, hands-on labs, and expert mentoring.

From Classroom to Virtualized Training

“I’m sorry, he’s not in the office today, he’s away for four days on a software training course.” We’ve all had the experience of trying to urgently reach a colleague or a consultant, only to find they are locked away in a training session. Of course, training is critically important, but it often takes up a disproportionate amount of time, effort and cost. Symantec Education Services has pioneered a unique approach to training and InTechnology Plc. is one of the first companies to adopt it. The Virtual Academy is designed to deliver a classroom-equivalent learning experience so eLearning can be a training option even if you are preparing for your initial implementation.

InTechnology specialises in data storage, data management and data security solutions, representing the world’s leading hardware and software vendors. Its comprehensive range of managed services helps clients reduce IT management costs, increase efficiency and ensure critical business continuity under any circumstances. Established in the U.K. in 1983, the company has an annual turnover of 500 million, and employs more than 500 staff in a network of offices throughout Europe.

Training: Benefits and Drawbacks

Like every organisation, InTechnology recognises the value of thorough skills training: to provide optimal technical support to its customers, the company needs to ensure staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge concerning the solutions they are implementing. At any time, InTechnology typically has a number of its staff undergoing off-site training, the

“Using Symantec Education Services’ Virtual Academy, I was able to sit wherever I chose, in complete comfort, and interact with the session. This made the learning experience unique. In addition, the ability to access lab machines remotely was a huge bonus. This was a very new experience for me; I totally enjoyed it and found it a fantastic way to train.”

Adam Mason

Senior Consultant
InTechnology Plc.

Company Profile

InTechnology Plc. (www.intechnology.co.uk) specialises in data storage, data management and data security solutions and was established in the United Kingdom in 1983. The company has an annual turnover of ?500 million, and employs more than 500 staff in a network of offices throughout Europe.

Industry

Information Technology

Solution

Education and training

Each staff member can stay current on new technologies while remaining available during training.

“Our initial scepticism about the quality and relevance of the courses was quickly replaced by complete satisfaction. It’s just like being in a physical classroom-environment, plus you benefit from the hands-on, live product experience. We are using it, and we recommend that our own clients use it as well.”

Adam Mason
Senior Consultant
InTechnology Plc.

drawback being that they are largely unavailable during the course of the training program. Moreover, there are the costs and time associated with traveling to the training site.

“Our headquarters are in Harrogate in the North of England and at any one time we will have a number of our consultants away at software companies in the South of England undergoing product training,” says Adam Mason, Senior Consultant, InTechnology. “Only last week, we had four consultants at Veritas Software’s Reading, England headquarters for a three-day course. Although important, it represents time when they could be with customers. Plus, of course, there is the travel time, the hotel costs and the loss of revenues from not charging their professional services time.”

InTechnology enjoys a long, close, and lucrative relationship as a distributor for Symantec Corporation. They use Veritas NetBackup™ and various other data center software solutions from Symantec for customers throughout Europ. They were also awarded the Veritas Master Reseller Award in 2004. With a view to accelerating and streamlining its training needs, Mason was drawn to Symantec Education Services’ Virtual Academy. “Anything is better than sitting on the M25 all day,” he explains. “We liked the idea of a distance learning training tool, but we were skeptical. How could an eLearning environment be as good as a classroom-equivalent learning experience?”

Virtual Academy allows the best of both worlds

The Virtual Academy is a combination of several different learning approaches to simulate the classroom

experience. The approach includes a series of course components that may include a live webcast, self-paced tutorials, hands-on labs and expert mentoring. Individuals or teams participate in live instructor-led webcasts with fellow students, they can explore the content and hands-on product demonstrations through the web-based learning, they can work in a remote lab environment to gain hands-on experience with the products. In essence, students experience training without ever leaving their desktop.

Mason outlines how a typical course operates. “Once a session has been set up by a Veritas tutor group, I am sent a start time for the session and receive my bespoke modules. I then become part of the classroom and can see who is online. At any time, I can hear, speak and even see the instructor. If I have a question, I click an icon, the tutor introduces the question into the forum and everyone can hear the question as well as the response. During one training session on Veritas NetBackup, we were able to navigate the software in a live environment, even though it was located in Canada!”

Saving Money While Receiving Training

The Symantec Education Services’ Virtual Academy is transforming InTechnology’s approach to training. Above all, there is a considerable saving on travel costs and time. “The hotels in Reading won’t be doing much business from InTechnology in the future,” he says. “We usually send consultants down to Symantec in Reading the night before the course, they are then there for up to three days and then have to travel back. Overall, each member of staff devotes

“Although [training is] important, it represents time when they could be with customers. Plus of course, there is the travel time, the hotel costs and the loss of revenues from not charging their professional services time.”

Adam Mason
Senior Consultant
InTechnology Plc.

up to 15 man-days per year to training. Using the Symantec Education Services Virtual Academy, they do it all from their desk. They can walk around the office with a wireless device talking to the tutors while simultaneously answering enquiries from their colleagues. It’s almost as though they are in two places at once. From the revenue point of view, our daily charge out rate is between £750 and £1,500 so there is a considerable cost saving being made.”

The second advantage relates to the quality of the training. “Our initial scepticism about the quality and relevance of the courses was quickly replaced by complete satisfaction. It’s just like being in a physical classroom-environment, plus you benefit from the hands-on, live product experience. We are using it, and we recommend that our own clients use it as well.”

Mason concludes, “I truly think this is the way the industry is heading. I take my hat off to Symantec, because they have pioneered this approach to training and really made it work. Using Symantec Education Services’ Virtual Academy, I was able to sit wherever I choose, in complete comfort and interact with the session. This made the learning experience unique. In addition, the ability to access lab machines remotely was a huge bonus. This was a very new experience for me, and I totally enjoyed it and found it a fantastic way to train.” ■

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Business Drivers

- Streamline training cost, time and effort
- Increase “face-time” with customers
- Improve quality of training

Technology Challenges

- Current technology limits worker availability during training classes

Solution

- Migration from off-site, instructor-led, classroom-based environment to virtualized training

Symantec Products

- Veritas NetBackup™

Symantec Services

- Symantec Education Services Virtual Academy

Business Results

- Eliminated travel costs and days away from the office
- Delivers critical technical training when and where InTechnology needs it most
- Rapid deployment of effective training straight to the desktop
- Able to leverage to implement, upgrade or optimise the success of a Symantec solution
- Able to simulate a classroom environment, provide a hands-on experience and promote interactivity