

Motherwell College, based in Lanarkshire Scotland, is a further and higher education College with more than 500 staff supporting some 20,000 students.

Offering 21st century state-of-the-art facilities, the new £70m College which was officially opened in 2010 caters for further and higher education provision as well as an enterprising hub. Playing a pivotal role in the region's development, Motherwell College brings education, business and the local community together.

As part of its strategy to support the vision of the organisation and to provide a flexible learning experience for students, the College has operated a virtual learning environment (VLE) for several years. In late 2010 as part of the e-learning strategic review, the College evaluated the impact of e-learning across the curriculum. As part of that review the College decided to explore alternatives to the existing Blackboard which had been the VLE for a number of years. This resulted in the College opting for a move to the open source alternative – Moodle. This move, whilst presenting many challenges including staff training, customising data structures and corporate design, provided the College with the opportunity and flexibility to 'shape' the VLE to suit the existing and future needs of a growing online market in education and training.

ENGAGING A SUPPLIER

Having decided on Moodle as the preferred VLE the next step was to engage a supplier that could provide the services required, cost effectively and to a very high standard. The College decided to outsource the hosting and ongoing support required to ensure continuity of service and secure systems backup of the VLE and learning content. In addition, the College updated the online resources which resulted in approximately 500 courses, many with complex data structures being successfully migrated from the existing Blackboard platform to the newly designed, modern looking Moodle.

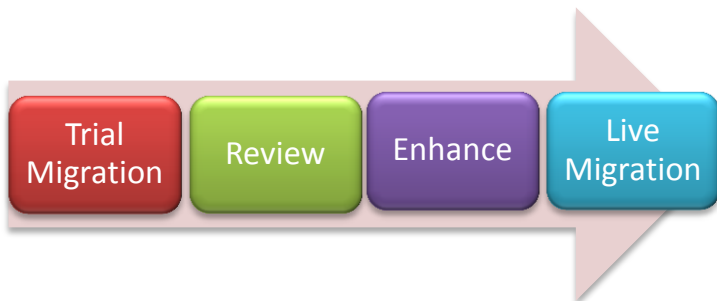
WHY ENOVATION SOLUTIONS?

As you may expect, engaging a supplier involved a competitive tendering process which identified a shortlist of official Moodle Partners from the UK and Ireland. Enovation Solutions was selected as the technical partner based on their established track record in successfully providing a range of similar services to colleges and universities in Ireland as well as reputable corporate clients. They also offered a pragmatic and clear migration process to automate as much of the course conversion from Blackboard to Moodle as possible within the timescales detailed in the College's migration programme. Staff at Enovation were particularly friendly and helpful in taking time to discuss and identify the exact requirements of our business specification which ensured a relatively smooth transition.

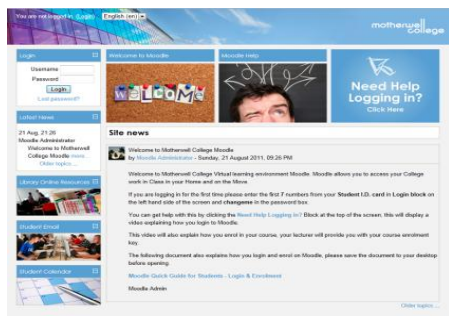


MIGRATING THE CONTENT

Having first implemented a dedicated infrastructure to host Moodle VLE, Enovation ran a trial migration of a number of courses selected by the College. This allowed the College an advance demonstration prior to migration. Once the trial migration was complete, the migrated courses were tested in Moodle. Any issues discovered were rectified by amending the migration script, allowing modifications to the script and the process to be rerun.



The migration of the rest of the courses was completed over the next few months as and when Blackboard courses were prepared. The courses were migrated in stages to allow time to test the migrated content and apply any changes to the script that might be necessary.



IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

It is important when considering content migration to a new VLE that expectations are set and as much preparation is completed in advance. The time taken in planning is critical to any successful project and this was borne out by the relationships built between staff at Motherwell College and Enovation during this process.

- **Preparation:** Prepare the content to be migrated (e.g. remove extraneous content)
- **Set realistic expectations:** The migration script has some limitations in terms of formatting. All migrated courses will need to be reviewed and in some cases tidied up by the course owner.
- **Pragmatic timelines:** Running the process is quick but the steps above take time and manipulating potentially large files over the internet can be relatively slow depending on systems capacity.

GO LIVE

Once the migration was finished, Motherwell College were able to prepare the site and their staff for the new academic term commencing in August 2011.

Enovation successfully delivered on the migration and implemented a robust high performance dedicated infrastructure to host the Moodle VLE for the College.