

# WORKING TOGETHER ACHIEVES EDUCATION COST SAVINGS

With the current focus on value for money, the success of collaborative working to save on costs within London Metropolitan Network (LMN) is of interest in the wider London community

**L**MN is the powerful IT network that underpins higher and further education in London and is now available to all public sector organisations with a link to teaching and learning. Among benefits for members are a range of shared services and training offered at discounted cost through work with partners.

This practical experience of reducing costs through collaboration has brought LMN into participation in working groups planning a new London network.

“We aim to maximise efficiency and access in our network across a wide range of stakeholders and LMN have a model of stakeholder management that works,” said Vince Tooke, business relationship manager at Transport for London and one of the prime movers in planning a new network for London. “We are interested in learning from LMN’s experience as we work on the One London project to create a single London-wide, customer facing network comprising the organisations in the GLA family and the London boroughs.”

Central to LMN’s education mission is the provision of a powerful and robust IT network and the benefits are felt already by local government bodies and not-for-profit organisations in the capital.

“We decided to use LMN for our library internet access and find it extremely reliable,” said Catherine Cooke, projects and development coordinator at Westminster Council. “It gives us huge bandwidth and is very fast. We use it for 144 full time equivalent staff and our general public users. The public don’t care about systems but they do care if the internet goes down – I can’t remember the last time we had a problem.”

“It was in 1996 that London’s universities and colleges got together to form LMN, to save on costs and improve services with a shared network – to achieve more func-



tionality for the same money,” explains LMN general manager Geoff Cooper.

“We now have 13 years’ experience in running a collaborative network, getting reduced prices or improved services, or both, for our members. We are pleased to have the opportunity to help in the planning of a new London network. The experience within the education community demonstrates that working together can reap many benefits.”

**“Our partnership with commercial providers works successfully to yield significant cost savings for members”**  
**Maria Ilia**

Through the collaboration model used by LMN, members also gain access to valuable shared services in data backup and recovery, in email messaging and ‘green’ disposal of IT assets – all offered at discounted rates through LMN’s negotiation with commercial suppliers.

“We aim to offer services which we have thoroughly researched for quality, performance and reliability,” said Maria Ilia, business development manager at LMN. “Our partnership with commercial providers works successfully to yield significant cost savings for members.”

LMN members make further savings on training courses, also negotiated at a discounted rate, including ITIL training, management training and networking training. ■

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