



Iespējamā misija
skolām un līderiem

Microsoft Live@edu Customer Solution Case Study

Introducing information and communications technologies in the study process: participants and employees of "Iespējamā misija" introduce *Microsoft Live@edu* in their project and in Latvia's schools

Overview

Country: Republic of Latvia, Riga
Sector: Education

Customer's Profile

"Iespējamā misija" (Mission Possible) is an initiative established by the Public Benefit Organisation "Ideju partneru fonds" and enterprises "Swedbank" and "Lattelecom" with the aim of involving young, talented university graduates with leader abilities and good academic achievements in the education system for it to become a modern sector which corresponds with the overall development of Latvia

Situation

Employees and participants of "Iespējamā misija" did not have a unified, shared e-mail system with additional services (calendar, discussion forums, storing contacts, storing and sharing documents) suitable for the initiative's brand and design and allowing for interaction and efficient cooperation in the study process

Solution

For the needs of "Iespējamā misija" *Microsoft Live@edu* system has been introduced. The participants of the programme are using the system for both, programme's internal communication and cooperation and for work with pupils in Latvia's educational institutions selected in the framework of the programme. It is provisioned to use the solution for communication, experience sharing and maintaining contact with graduates of "Iespējamā misija"

Benefits

The system provides convenient, simple and efficient environment for exchange, storing and communication of information among all parties involved; free participation in the programme and maintenance (hosting); e-mail domain corresponding with the programme's brand and the visual design of the service; free support for junk e-mail screening; technical support to the programme's IT personnel; high system security

Microsoft Live@edu is a free electronic communications system suitable for every educational institution brand, and ensures its users with simple and easy online interactions and information exchange via unified format e-mails and additional options – calendar, option to save contacts, storing and sharing information, as well as the choice of other services.

Situation

The initiative "Iespējamā misija" was launched in 2007 with the aim of involving young, talented university graduates with leader abilities and good academic achievements in the education system for it to become a modern sector which corresponds with the overall development of Latvia. In parallel to the work at schools, the participants of the programme, under the guidance of professional educators and experts of various sectors, are acquiring knowledge necessary for the profession of progressive-minded pedagogues, and are sharing their experience at schools with each other.

Until the beginning of 2009, when cooperation with "Microsoft Latvia" began, the employees and participants of the programme had neither a unified e-mail system suitable for the programme's needs, nor online communication and cooperation tools. The study materials necessary for the participants of the programme were

not stored at a single location online, which hindered cooperation and implementation of improvements, as well as resulted in wasted time. Also, there was not a unified system that the programme's participants could use to introduce the society with their observations and conclusions with respect to the work at school, experience acquired, and aims. Communication was difficult and scattered among various Internet tools.

After the invitation by "Microsoft Latvia", in January 2009, Zane Oliņa, Director of the programme "Iespējamā misija", participated at Microsoft Innovative School Conference in London. She obtained contacts and information on the application of technologies in the study process encouraged her to address "Microsoft Latvia" with the aim of choosing the best solution for the improvement of interaction and cooperation with the programme's participants.

Solution

"Microsoft Latvia" proposed *Live@edu* as the most efficient solution to "Iespējamā misija" for simplification and improvement of communication and cooperation.

In the summer of 2009, the employees and participants of "Iespējamā misija", with the technical support of "Microsoft Latvia" and the initial training, launched the application of *Live@edu* options, including:

a visually adjusted **Microsoft Outlook Live** e-mail with 10 GB mailbox and 20 MB attachments option for each employee and participant of the initiative "Iespējamā misija" for simplification and improvement of communication and cooperation;

calendar with reminders, tasks, option for planning joint meetings etc.;

Windows Live Messenger instant messaging options and discussions in a group with the option of sharing photos;

Windows Live SkyDrive option to store 25 GB information online with access from any computer, as well as to share this information with other "Iespējamā misija" employees, teachers, colleagues and pupils;

Windows Live Spaces option to create a personalised space with blogs, photo galleries, friends' network for information exchange and discussions, also linked to information stored at SkyDrive;

In autumn 2009, realising that the application of *Live@edu* could be even more efficient and that the cooperation among employees and participants of the initiative could be made even faster and easier, "Iespējamā misija" started to use **Microsoft Office Live Workspace** online storage, access and joint action tool which allows storing more than 1,000 documents. The document sites can be protected with a password which allows controlling the access of other users. *Microsoft Office Live Workspace* allowed the participants of "Iespējamā misija" to simplify the process of creating professional growth notes and information exchange with their mentors, as well as to make these processes more dynamic.

"I was an active user of Live Spaces options before, therefore, the transition to Live@edu in the framework of "Iespējamā misija" programme, was not difficult for me. At the moment I am using three of its accounts – the one of "Iespējamās misija", personal, as well as skolotajs.lv. I am glad that I can access all three accounts with the same password," says the second year participant of "Iespējamā misija" and the English language teacher **Edīte Millere**.

"Previously too, when looking for options online to upload documents for sharing, I had discovered Live Workspace. When the representatives of "Microsoft Latvia" introduced me with Live@edu options, I supported the use of these tools at "Iespējamā misija", since they are easy to use, facilitate mutual communication, work with documents and study materials," says **Mārtiņš Bērziņš**, participant of "Iespējamā misija" and Mathematics and Information Sciences teacher.

Results

During the project, all employees of "Iespējamā misija", as well as all programme's participants migrated to the new, free solution – 12 participants selected at the 1st year's round, and 14 participants selected at the round of 2009 – in total 26 young teachers.

"Windows Live and WorkSpace environment allows for regular communication with programme participants. We use the environment as a study support – for publishing study materials, for discussion of certain subjects dealt with during studies, for participants' experience exchange in the form of blogs and discussions –, and as a mean to share valuable resources – for links and study materials, as well as feedback for each individual participant who publishes his/her professional notes in WorkSpace, and our pedagogues can comment on these notes. Using this environment for study purposes, we are modelling its use for participants – new teachers, who, on their turn, can use and take over this experience for work with their pupils. We are grateful to the employees of "Microsoft Latvia" for the patience and readiness to support us during this work and for always finding new technological options and adapting this tool for the study and communication purposes of the current functional programme," says **Zane Oliņa**, Director of the programme "Iespējamā misija".

All programme employees and participants are actively, on every day basis using the e-mail system created, as well as *SkyDrive*, *Live Spaces* and *Live Workspace* options, and other tools for their individual needs, e.g. storing, recovery and sharing of study materials, delivering and receiving of work, as well as for communication with their mentor. Similarly, the participants are using tools for fast and efficient communication with all participants, brain-storming and mutual discussions.

"For interaction we often use Live Messenger since the tool allows seeing which participants are online," says **Edīte Millere**, participant of "Iespējamā misija" and English language teacher.

"I use SkyDrive for "Iespējamā misija" internal communication, e.g. to deliver homework. As an advantage ensured by online data storage I can point out that it is simple and user friendly," says **Viesturs Eglītis**, participant of "Iespējamā misija" and Biology teacher.

In fall 2009, the participants successfully started to use *Microsoft Office Live Workspace*. Each programme participant has been created a folder and the participants have learned how to use the solution. At the moment, an active trial stage is being implemented – sharing study materials, implementing changes and corrections. Via storing the documents online it is possible to work with the materials and to receive feedback.

"With WorkSpace I was introduced by my colleague at "Iespējamā misija". Since I like trying new things in practice, I immediately saw the functionality of this tool. This tool's user interface is very simple. The data downloading process was also simplified by plug-in envisaged for Office 2007 which allows placing documents on WorkSpace without having to use a browser," says **Viesturs Eglītis**.

The employees of "Iespējamā misija" have also started using *Live@edu* for more efficient cooperation with their pupils. Mostly, *Sky Drive* and *Microsoft Office Live Workspace* solutions are used to place study materials and home-works at a location accessible by pupils.

"I started to use Live Workspace for work with pupils, since it was the simplest way

of delivering study materials to the pupils. Copying is costly, while paper notes take too much time. This seemed like a logical solution. The pupils were fast to adapt to the changes, since everyone knows how to use Internet resources and uses computer on everyday basis," says **Viesturs Eglītis**.

"I am Mathematics and Information Sciences teacher. Live Workspace is very suitable for sharing study materials with pupils. It would be very convenient if, in the future, all pupils used Live@edu. I have also trained several teachers.

For example, already now study materials for physics can be found online," says **Mārtiņš Bērziņš**, "Iespējamā misija" participant.

It is envisaged to adjust *Live@edu* solution so that programme graduates (the first teachers will graduate from the programme in the summer 2010) could maintain a link with the programme and its participants, share experience and create joint discussions.

On Microsoft® Live@edu

Live@edu is a flexible platform that offers adjusted e-mail system to educational institutions, at the same time relieving the institutions of its maintenance and visual solution costs. The e-mail system is complemented with a number of online Internet applications – calendar, *Windows Live Messenger*, *Windows Live SkyDrive*, *Windows Live Spaces*, *Microsoft Office Live Workspace*. This progressive and easy to use system ensures the parties involved with e-mail access and extended services via mobile phone.

Free hosting and adaption to the educational institution's unified design is ensured by Microsoft reliable infrastructure which is regularly revised and upgraded. *Live@edu* is integrated in the educational institution's existing IT infrastructure allowing the information technologies team to use the advantages offered by international company's services to offer the pupils and teachers modern and innovative solutions for improved communication and study process. *Live@edu* offers the opportunity to maintain regular and lasting communication and cooperation with the educational institution's graduates.

For More Information

Additional information on *Microsoft Live@edu* solution:
<http://www.microsoft.com/liveatedu/>

Additional information on the initiative "Iespējamā misija":
<http://www.iespejamamisija.lv>