

Emma Darcy, who has been the CLC Manager since it first opened in 2003, had a clear vision for the centre "I wanted elearning@luton to be a genuinely inclusive facility for all Luton Schools to benefit from, regardless of age or ability level.

It was essential that the centre provided state of the art facilities and highly skilled staff in a safe and welcoming environment." Passionate about media, Emma continued "I have over ten years experience in using film and media with learners of all ages and abilities and found that it never fails to motivate and engage students. Learners are able to express themselves in a way that is most appropriate to them – it is genuinely personalised learning."

The centre has built up a vast library of podcasts, videos and mixed media of students' work during the past six years and continues to create new material on a daily basis. The CLC staff wanted to be able to upload and store this content in a central location, access on demand and share it. The remit therefore was to find a suitable video streaming and archive solution to facilitate their vision.

Having already dealt with Planet PC for the acquisition of their TV studio equipment, Deputy Manager Christian Turton and ICT Manager Raj Godhaniya arranged for a demonstration of Planet eStream. Unlike other content delivery platforms they researched, they found that Planet eStream was able to deliver the innovative features, flexibility and security the CLC needed to fulfil their criteria.

Planet eStream was subsequently installed and commissioned in May 2010 and staff were quick to adopt the technology. Emma told us how straightforward they found it to use and particularly loved the simplicity of the upload feature and the context of being able to add related media. Making excellent use of the features available in the product, Raj was soon able to create an online resource to stream content for anytime, anywhere access and 'elearningTV' was born.



Planet eStream has enabled extensive functionality for 'elearningTV'. Emma explained "Staff can tag content under headings such as 'esafety', 'animation', etc, to allow easy searching. Viewers are able to view and download resources, comment on content and give ratings to the work. It is also possible to add chapters to content making it easier to pinpoint the most relevant information in a longer film or podcast."

Raj has used 'elearningTV' to interact with the centre's TV studio and stream productions to the internet live. He found this particularly useful during the video and music technology summer school held in July. The week long activity culminated in a live screening to showcase the students' work, however it was not possible for all parents to attend. Raj told us that the broadcast had over 150 hits from absent parents, friends and educators at the time and was delighted that they had been able to offer this facility.

One of the features of Planet eStream which has been widely adopted by the CLC, as well as schools in the borough and the council, has been the 'categories' feature which the centre have dubbed 'channels' on 'elearningTV'. Currently, there are four channels up and running. Luton Borough Council are using their channel 'Luton in Harmony' in an innovative way to promote understanding in their community and to celebrate and promote diversity. Their material is widely used as a teaching resource for school assemblies, etc.

The CLC have used 'categories' to set up a channel for themselves as a marketing tool to promote the primary and secondary service provision they have available. Emma has found that using short video bites proves to be a much more compelling publicity tool than the more traditional method of paper distribution.

Richmond Hill school is a special needs school who wanted a means for parents to be able to view their children's work on a regular basis. With the 'categories' feature of Planet eStream, elearning@luton were able to offer them a controlled resource that was password protected and a safe and appropriate way to view information.

elearning@luton and Luton Borough Council reached the finals of the 2010 elearning Foundation Home Access Awards. Their entry of 'elearningTV' for "Most Innovative Project" was described as encapsulating the ethos of Home Access.

We asked Raj and Emma to sum up their experience with Planet eStream:

Raj "More than I expected – a brilliant product. For the three years I have been dealing with Planet PC the support has been brilliant. We always get what we need when we need it."

Emma "I have been delighted and very impressed with how quickly and easily elearning@luton has benefited from Planet eStream technology. This is a cross curricular tool for learners of all ages and abilities and allows us to support our schools both in the centre and remotely. I am excited to see how the technology will continue to evolve and we look forward to working with the staff at Planet PC in the future."