



CASE STUDY

Client

Academy Transformation Trust (ATT)

Services

ICT Current State Review,
ICT Strategy and ICT Vision

► Academy Transformation Trust (ATT)

Summary

Academy Transformation Trust (ATT) wanted all of their pupils, teachers, staff and parents, across their 22 academies, to benefit from the innovations at some of their leading ICT schools.



The ICT Team knew that, to create the ICT infrastructure that could facilitate high quality, equitable learning experiences, they needed a full picture of what was going on with ICT across all their academies. Once they had this, they could then make the right improvements in the right places.

Led by the energetic James Howell, the Trust's Director of ICT, ATT also needed to ensure that any ICT investment and spend was considered, cost-effective, and properly planned.

As James explained, "We wanted to develop a Trust-wide ICT Strategy which would help meet our educational goals and have ICT spend planned on a 3 year-cycle."

Having done initial internal research, James knew that ICT provision, planning and spend across the Trust was incredibly variable. There were pockets of excellence, but this was not replicated across all the academies

– this variability affected pupils and did not provide an equitable education experience.

However, James's department did not have the capacity internally to carry out a detailed ICT Audit across the whole MAT. James saw this as an opportunity to bring in a partner organisation with fresh, expert, objective and unbiased eyes.

Choosing a highly recommended partner

Novatia was recommended to James by peers at another large Trust, Ormiston Academy Trust (OAT). OAT had engaged Novatia to set up and navigate a successful move to Trust-wide procurement the previous year.

As James says, "The results Novatia had delivered for OAT and other MATs really resonated with the Directors at ATT – we wanted an ICT partner who had worked with complex MATs like ours; and delivered results."

Main Challenges

- 1 The Trust wanted to create a high quality, equitable learning experience across all their academies – not just the few that excelled at ICT provision.
- 2 Any improvement plan had to be considered, cost-effective and planned on a 3-year cycle.
- 3 The internal capacity, at the Trust, to conduct a full review was limited. They wanted to have an outside pair of eyes, bringing experience from outside of the Trust.

Methodology

- 1 They asked Novatia to carry out a full ICT Audit across all 22 academies to have a comprehensive picture of the Current State of their ICT.
- 2 Novatia began by helping the Trust Senior Management Team create their ICT Vision – this then allowed the ‘right’ questions to be asked at the ICT Audit, so Novatia could gauge how far away from the ‘Vision’ ATT were.
- 3 At the end, following Novatia’s recommended approach of Vision -> Audit -> Gap Analysis and Strategy, the Trust had an immediate, prioritised Improvement Plan to work on and was able to build their 3 Year Plan to deliver the ICT Vision.

THE APPROACH: Vision first

Novatia Project Lead, Jan Harrison, began by asking ATT what they wanted to achieve with their ICT.

While ATT’s Management Team had clear ideas about what that ICT Vision would look like, there was no shared ownership and they hadn’t formally articulated it in a way that would bring all stakeholders on board; without stakeholders on board, the vision would not be realised.

Jan explains, “In order to do an effective ICT Audit, my team needed to know what ATT wanted their ICT to look like, how they wanted technology to be used across the trust, what their priorities and ambitions were for their pupils. In short, the Trust needed to clearly articulate their ICT Vision.”

Therefore, James put together a representational Focus Group. This group worked with Jan, who through workshops and consultation helped them create their strong, unifying, ICT Vision. This included that they wanted ICT to be:

“...an ‘invisible’ service underpinning all the work of the Trust and its schools and enabling us to achieve our wider organisation mission and vision”.

The ICT Audit and Gap Analysis across 22 Schools

Once the ICT Vision was in place, Jan and her team could structure the ICT Audit to identify the gaps that ATT needed to address in order to achieve their ICT Vision.

ATT’s vision was clearly focused on using ICT to deliver consistent, high quality experiences in education for students. Therefore, Novatia consultants visited each school, with a focus on how technology was being used for education.

The Novatia Team investigated, researched and analysed each of these areas, then gave ATT a score so they could see how well they were performing in each:

- ICT Strategy and Leadership
- Using ICT for Teaching and Learning
- Communication and Collaboration
- Resources: systems
- Resources: services
- Safe and Secure ICT

The Gap Analysis was done through extensive interviews with students, teachers, school leaders in every school in the Trust.

James says, “Jan was really, really good and incredibly patient. At each academy, she or Andrew, her colleague, met with the academy SLT (Senior Leadership Team), staff, pupils and stakeholders to get their true feelings about ICT.

“They got the good and the bad – which was great. We really wanted to find that out so we could genuinely improve ICT across the whole Trust.”

The Novatia Team also carried out technical interviews with the ICT leads across the Trust, as well as interviewing the management team.

The result was an ICT Audit that was thorough, focussed, and clearly showed ATT what they needed to do next.

► **NEXT STEPS:** A planned approach to improvement

Jan presented the Audit results and Gap Analysis to the Executive Team with a RAG Improvement Plan, as well as suggestions for the strategy which would make ATT's ICT Vision a reality.

Following the presentation and discussion, James was then able to create a 3-year spending plan to improve ATT's ICT.

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We took Novatia's Audit, and our goal is to convert all the Reds to Greens within a year – ambitious but I have a good team behind me. We also have our desired 3-year ICT Plan, so we know what we have to work on and what we are working towards.

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Because they took a systematic, structured approach to improving their ICT, James and the Executive Team at ATT can be confident that their 3-year ICT plan is going to allow the delivery of the high quality, equitable learning experience that they want for all of their pupils.

Final thoughts

“Novatia were very easy to work with”, James says, “Once we made the decision to choose them it was really nice; it was just done.

“I didn't need to worry about it as Novatia clearly knew what they were doing and got on with it.

“I would certainly recommend Novatia with no doubt. It made my life a lot easier so I could focus on other things.”



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