

Italian school switches to remote learning in 48 hours

The American School of Milan keeps 900 students learning during the COVID-19 outbreak thanks to technology



Education | Italy

Business needs

With huge areas of Italy under government lockdown due to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the American School of Milan wanted learning to continue, but its 900 students and 100 teachers were all confined to their homes.

Solutions at a glance

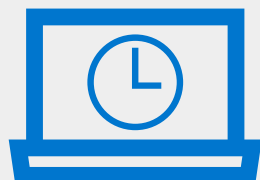
- [Dell Latitude laptops](#)
- [Dell EMC PowerEdge servers](#)

Business results

- Morale remains high among staff and students
- Front-office staff can also work from home

48hrs

to switch to remote teaching and learning



Zero

school days lost



On Sunday 1 March, 2020, the Italian government announced restrictions not seen in Europe since the Second World War. From the following day, schools, businesses and other institutions across the north of the country were closed to prevent the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

For many schools, this would have caused panic. With students and teachers confined to their homes, how could learning continue? But the American School of Milan, an English-speaking school for 900 children aged between 3 and 18 years, was ready to act.

“We asked teachers to come in on the Monday to put together learning plans that could be delivered remotely,” explains Stephen Reiach, the school’s director of technology. “On Tuesday morning, we resumed lessons from home.”

Tech-savvy school community faces challenge head on

None of this would have been possible without the school’s robust IT strategy. Technology features across the curriculum from a young age, and teachers deliver learning resources in online classrooms, which students access either through their own devices or school-issued Dell laptops with Intel® Core™ processors.

“Our students were comfortable learning and collaborating outside a classroom environment, but we didn’t have much experience of teaching via video link,” says Reiach. “Teachers quickly set up a website where they could provide each other with tips and support, as well as a site for parents to help them with their children’s learning during the closure.”

Meanwhile, front-office staff use a virtual private network (VPN) to log on to their applications—hosted at the school on Dell EMC PowerEdge servers with Intel® Xeon® processors. The scalability of the PowerEdge servers allowed them to work from home with the same performance and security as when working at the school.

“The good news is that we don’t foresee having to extend the school year to accommodate lost days.”

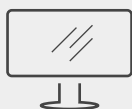
Stephen Reiach, Director of Technology,
American School of Milan

The secret to a fast switchover

At a stressful time for everyone, the 1,000-plus community at the American School of Milan was able to switch to off-site learning within 48 hours. Reiach credits this to several factors:

- The level of comfort students and staff have with educational technology
- Cloud tools like Google Classroom that facilitate videoconferencing
- Widespread access to high-speed internet
- Powerful laptops and servers, which can handle the demands of multimedia streaming and handling large remotely hosted files

After weeks of remote working, Reiach reports that morale is high among students and staff. “We’re learning and adjusting as we go,” he says, “but the good news is that we don’t foresee having to extend the school year to accommodate lost days. Despite the challenges, it’s business as usual.”



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