



Royal Danish Defence College

The Royal Danish Defence College is using Novell® Forum to provide a distance learning environment for its students, giving them greater flexibility and eliminating the need to spend long periods away from home. The Novell solution also significantly reduces travel and accommodation expenses for the College.

Overview

The Royal Danish Defence College is tasked with enhancing the ability of the Danish armed forces to carry out national and international missions. Providing university-level education, training and research-based consultancy, the College is active in the fields of security policy, strategy and military operations, and military leadership.

Challenge

The Royal Danish Defence College and other educational institutions in the armed forces aim to deliver 'blended learning,' combining traditional classroom-based activities with self-guided distance learning. To support this policy, the Royal Danish Defence College had built its own distance learning solution, offering basic collaboration environments and a limited range of functionality.

As the number and scope of courses grew over time, the lack of flexibility in the in-house solution became more apparent. The College wanted to move the emphasis more towards distance learning, but the limitations of its existing system made it impossible to reduce the time spent in the classroom.

The students typically combine their education with their professional duties

as members of the Danish armed forces. The need to frequently travel to the campus was inconvenient and disruptive to their home lives, especially as they might be based several hours away. Equally, the predominance of classroom-based learning generated significant travel and accommodation expenses for the military.

Solution

With the aim of creating a richer and more flexible virtual learning environment, the College implemented Novell Forum. The Novell solution provides a unified platform for communications and team collaboration, enabling College students and tutors to create, share, discuss and manage information whenever and wherever they choose.

"Novell Forum gives our students the convenience of learning at a time and place that suits them best—and enables us to create a virtual college that closely simulates a traditional college experience," said Claus Hartvig, Case Officer on Technology and e-Learning, Royal Danish Defence College Institute of Pedagogy. "We want students to be able to work in teams to develop and manage their own learning strategies. We believe that this approach—supported by Novell Forum—increases the quality of education, helping students to learn more than they would in a static classroom environment."

Royal Danish Defence College at a glance:

Danish Armed Forces' powerhouse for education, training and research-generated consultancy

■ Industry:

Education, Government

■ Location:

Denmark

■ Products and Services:

Novell Forum (precursor to Novell Teaming + Conferencing)

■ Results:

- Created a rich and flexible distance learning environment
- Reduced travel and accommodation expenses
- Achieved full return on investment within six months

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Royal Danish Defence College Institute of Pedagogy*



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Each course that the College delivers in Novell Forum typically provides a virtual classroom, team rooms, a teachers' room, breakout room, library, and a “café” with bulletin boards. This rich environment engages students and ensures that distance learning is not a solitary experience.

Novell Forum stores a complete, searchable record of all interactions, including instant messages and conference calls. The ability to review past activities considerably enriches the learning environment, allowing students to trace the development of new ideas and providing an opportunity to re-use each other's resources and knowledge.

The College is working with IT Quality, a Novell Platinum Partner, to upgrade to Novell Teaming + Conferencing, the new version of Novell Forum. “IT Quality is a capable partner, combining impressive knowledge of the Novell software with strong local support capabilities,” said Hartvig. “This support is important as we expect the solution to grow beyond the present 2,500 users, ultimately benefitting the entire armed forces by improving the skills of service personnel.”

Results

By enabling the College to deliver more courses largely or exclusively through distance learning, Novell Forum is contributing to a significant reduction in travel and accommodation expenses for the Danish armed forces.

“We conducted a study of the return on investment for Novell Forum, and concluded

that the payback period was as little as six months,” said Hartvig. “Equally important, the solution facilitates the re-use of educational and administrative materials, and cuts the workload for tutors, further reducing our costs. We anticipate that Novell Teaming + Conferencing will produce even more significant benefits.”

Novell Forum adds a new dimension to the courses offered by the College by giving students experience with next-generation technology and new collaborative techniques that will be increasingly important in their careers. Furthermore, research suggests that the self-guided nature of distance learning promotes faster uptake and longer retention of knowledge, making it more valuable than classroom-based learning. With the planned move to Novell Teaming + Conferencing, the student experience will become even richer.

The Novell solution has also improved the ability of students to coordinate their education around work and family commitments. This flexibility is particularly vital for the Danish home guard—civilian volunteers who have jobs outside the military—enabling them to study during the evenings and on weekends.

“Novell Forum enables our students to fully participate in courses without being tied to a particular location or timetable,” said Hartvig. “This significantly improves everyone's quality of life: there is no longer a need for long journeys to and from college or to be away from one's family for long periods.”



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