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Schools jumping at Coast developed innovative, green, communications solution

Sunshine Coast technology company, Schoolzine, is taking on the world with its innovative communications system developed specially for schools.

In just two and a half years, more than 85 Australian private and public schools have signed up for the system to send newsletters, emails and SMSs to parents and now, Schoolzine is taking its platform to the world.

Schoolzine managing director Phil Reardon said while Schoolzine began as a solution to help schools manage and distribute e-newsletters, it had now developed into being a complete communications system.

“Schools can use our system to send newsletters and other notices via email, or to send SMSs to advise of cancelled activities or other urgent messages,” Mr Reardon said.

He said in fact demand for the system had accelerated since the Swine Flu epidemic during which schools needed to communicate quickly and efficiently with parents in relation to school closures and other safety precautions.

“This is where the system really comes into its own for schools, they can simply type in the text message they need to send and then send it simultaneously to all the parents they need to reach,” Mr Reardon said.

“This is effective for emergency situations but also just when they need to advise parents of cancelled activities and the like.”

Based at the Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast, a University of the Sunshine Coast company, Schoolzine takes a school’s videos, photos and text and turns it into an e-newsletter and hardcopy within a single business day, which once approved is sent to everyone in the school’s database.

“It is environmentally friendly because it eliminates the printing and paper needed with traditional newsletters and it saves time for the school’s administration staff and the need for postage as a result it is more cost effective,” Mr Reardon said.

“It also means that messages that were previously sent home with students reached parents in a timely fashion.”

He said by seeking sponsors Schoolzine is able to subsidise the cost of the system and also give a percentage of the sponsorship to the schools, allowing them to generate an income from a previously very expensive process and to communicate better with their community.

Innovation Centre Entrepreneur-In-Residence Nigel Hall said Schoolzine was a great example of the innovative companies developing locally.

“Schoolzine has developed a great solution to a common problem and they are now taking that solution around the world, including South Africa where they are already in negotiation with several schools,” Mr Hall said.

“The Sunshine Coast is emerging as one of Australia’s innovation hotspots and at the Innovation Centre we are dedicated to supporting that development”.

The Innovation Centre offers competitive, state-of-the-art offices, with a great location close to the University of the Sunshine Coast and to the Business and Technology Precinct to be developed across the road.

“Not only can companies access students from the university, they can locate themselves at what is becoming the ICT, Clean Tech, and Creative hub of the Sunshine Coast,” Mr Hall said.

The Innovation Centre is already home to 28 businesses, mainly in ICT, Clean Tech and Creative Industry sectors and also offers business development and networking opportunities for businesses throughout the region at the Centre and also via its redeveloped website at www.innovation-centre.com.au including the ‘Zero to Hero’ program which allows people at any stage of business development access to expert advice.

For more information on Schoolzine visit www.schoolzine.com.au. For more information about the Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast visit www.innovation-centre.com.au.

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