The Move to Online

Two Projects and their Aftermath

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The Two Projects

- Online Help Desk
- Virtual Parent Teacher Conference
Goals

- **Goal 1**: Discuss and reflect on using Workspaces + AppsScripts as a potential solution for gaps in infrastructure

- **Goal 2**: Upskill ourselves (Q & A) in AppsScripts and/or Google Workspaces data management options
Closer Look

- Context
- Conception & Planning
- How’d it go?
- Reflection
- Q&A
Context

- Online Help Desk
  - Crisis Management
- Virtual Parent Teacher Conferences
  - Change Management
Conception & Planning

- Online Help Desk
  - Crisis Management
  - Used “bleeding edge” technology
  - ChatBot via AppsScripts
  - Team of 1

- Virtual Parent Teacher Conferences
  - Change Management
  - Built upon existing infrastructure
  - Youcanbook.me + AppsScripts
  - Data Manager assistance
Low stakes. The sort of project that excited me, felt that I was inventing something new out of thin air.

Virtual PTCs
Relied on existing processes and procedures; Paperwork.
User Story for Help Desk

The Splash Page is a Google site with buttons.

It's the landing page set up in the Workspaces domain, different for each organizational unit.

We have several help desks, by them using one location, we were able to change the user story.
Help Desk Google Form

The Google Form is **embedded** in a Google Site.

This way, we can **surround** the form with informational data.

Users can also click to find **other** resources.
The Form

User selects the kind.

**Live HelpDesk** is the one I created when the school moved online.

The user then enters the description, and indicates the priority.

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Raise Ticket

Your email address will be recorded when you submit this form.

Not adam.morris@igbis.edu.my? [Switch account](#)

* Required

Select the kind of ticket *

If it is concerning devices or installations, or something else that only ICT people can do, please choose "Operations."

- [ ] Live HelpDesk (School Hours)
- [ ] Operations HelpDesk Ticket
- [ ] Upskilling or Coaching Request
- [ ] Facilities / Maintenance Ticket
- [ ] Stationary Ticket

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#FEGTechConf
On Submission

Submitting the form does two things: It saves to the spreadsheet, and also initiates the onSubmit trigger on AppsScripts.

The script is sent a copy of that information. It then parses it, and creates a new message on the **Google Chat Room**, on behalf of the **Chat Bot**.

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When I turn my camera on it shows my face for me but it doesn't show my face for other people.
Connects to Chat Room

The Chat Bot service then renders a ticket as displayed on right. It provides buttons for ICT Support Staff to click on.

We accept and close tickets this way.

We can then use the chat room to troubleshoot.

#FEGTechConf
Example Interaction

Users can interact with IT Support staff, or their keen colleagues.

Seen here is a teacher who was having a similar problem.

Turns out Google had changed a default setting. (Quickly resolved.)

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Use the Bot for repeat questions:

@-ing the bot in a chat room with key words displays pre-defined cards, with links.

That way we can build instructions once.

This info is filled out in the Chat Bot script itself.

(TODO: Make it a GSheet instead)
Chat Bot: HOW

Writing the Chat Bot was straight-forward, and lots of help.

Library linked here is how I decided to connect Chat API service

(I do plan on detailing how I did this in more depth.)

Link to Google Apps Script Chat Bot Quickstart
More info on the process.

Link to my repo where you can use AppsScripts to interact with the Chat Room API

Bonus: Google’s explanation of spreadsheet metadata, which can be used to update the data.
HelpDesk: How’d it go?

I anticipated it would be **well received**. In many ways it was:

- We had students and teachers able to understand how to get help immediately and the replies were prompt
- A rotation system meant that we could handle it most hours

In many ways there were some **wrinkles**:

- Many users just started typing into the chat room directly, bypassing the ticket raising process
- Students and staff could see each others’ messages
HelpDesk: Cost

The biggest cost was in the running of the IT Department

- An additional Help Desk system meant that we couldn’t capture data in a way that was preferable
- Support staff found it highly distracting
- Communication disruption
HelpDesk: Aftermath

The Online Help Desk is still in use during online learning periods, but falls into disuse as soon as face-to-face is reached:

- Our original help desk has moved to the cloud
- Communication disruption

However it did get revived!

- A student in Grade 5 was shown the “GeekSquad” bot and that conversation led to creation of the GeekSquad activity.
Online Help Desk
Low stakes. The sort of project that excited me, felt that I was inventing something new out of thin air.

Virtual PTCs
Relied on existing processes and procedures; Paperwork.
Parents go to a Google Site that has headshots of their child’s teachers.

Each head goes to a **YouCanBook.me** page.
Sign up

It renders the user’s Google calendar, greyed out if another parent already booked there.

(Or if staff booked self out.)
It then makes a Google calendar event for both teacher calendar, and parents’ calendar

It includes a Google Meet link.

It’s the same event, so it’s the same link!
The plan was originally for users to use 
meet.google.com
which shows upcoming events.

Or just use their calendar.

Dear Student & Parents & Teachers,

Apologies for the previous send which did not include teachers names.

Please find your schedule (including teacher names this time) for the virtual Parent Teacher Conference below.

You can join the meet at the time by clicking the links below. Alternatively, you can go to https://meet.google.com which will present all the bookings on the day as well.

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

02:00 PM  
yati.akhtar@igbis.edu.my
https://meet.google.com/hkr-vynn-thb

02:20 PM  
rong.my@igbis.edu.my
Instead, after initial feedback from Parent Group, we collated all of the meet links and sent them detailed email.

(It took a few sends to get it just right.)

Dear Student & Parents & Teachers,

Apologies for the previous send which did not include teachers names.

Please find your schedule (including teacher names this time) for the virtual Parent Teacher Conference below.

You can join the meet at the time by clicking the links below. Alternatively, you can go to https://meet.google.com which will present all the bookings on the day as well.

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Virtual PTCs: How’d it go?

I anticipated issues:

- Some parents signed up with the personal email address
- Some parents would need Help Desk support
- Small window between each meet

But there were hardly any wrinkles at all:

- A plethora of positive feedback
- Even parents who often need help with tech thought it went great
Virtual PTCs: Cost

The biggest cost was in stress, but it was worth it:

- Difficult to connect the IGB parent emails with their personal emails
- Secretaries were helpful in knowing which parent’s personal email was for which child

Youcanbook.me was very affordable and presentable, but do we really need it?

- TODO: The use of slot appointments instead
Virtual PTCs: Aftermath

The Online Help Desk is still in use during online learning periods, but falls into disuse as soon as **face-to-face** is reached:

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Reflection from Community

● Online Help Desk
  - Limitations of the Google Chat Room made for less than ideal experience
  - Students and staff sharing the same room was problematic
  - Naming it the “Help Desk” was a problem

● Virtual Parent Teacher Conferences
  - No one reported missing a session due to technical failure
  - High praise
  - “Gold standard”
Internal Reflection

- Online Help Desk
  - The IT team viewed it as a threat to existing help desk structure
  - The IT team saw it a project that wasn’t sustainable
  - Got reformulated for a student club

- Virtual Parent Teacher Conferences
  - Some communication oversights:
  - Secretaries assumed that I had completed the landing page, when actually that process hadn’t changed
Finally

● Online Help Desk
  - Reform, but if investing in it is too much trouble, chuck it
  - (release it as open source so not all is lost)

● Virtual Parent Teacher Conferences
  - Cherish
  - Huge success
Questions?
Thank you!

- Have questions? Email us at xxx!
- The recordings will be available after the conference

Tweet Us @FariaEduGroup #FEGTechConf