



Report:

Implementation of the Fronter Open Learning platform in Oslo Schools

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1. Introduction

In 2003, the City of Oslo Education Agency (UDE) selected the Fronter Open Learning Platform as a common platform for all schools in Oslo. Fronter was selected to fulfil the agency's strategy to make pedagogic use of ICT available to all students in their daily learning activity.

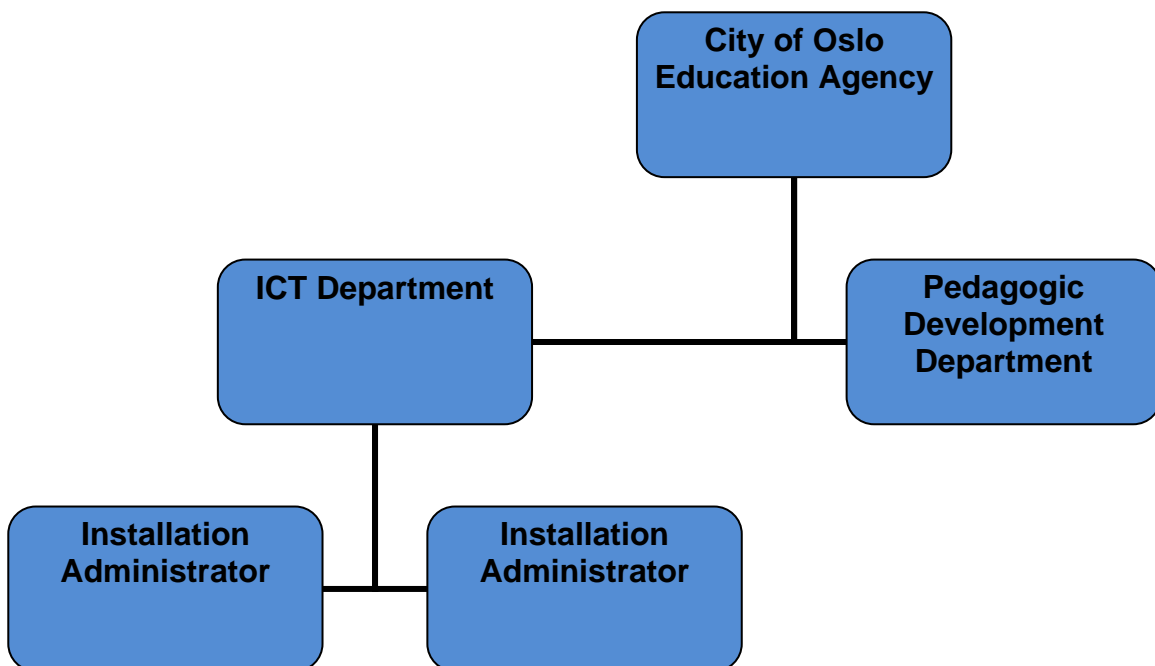
The learning platform can be seen as a virtual school building, with virtual corridors and rooms - operating hand in hand with the physical environment to enhance the teaching and learning experience. A contract for 75 000 users was agreed enabling all of Oslo's students and staff to 'log in' to their new virtual school building.

All Oslo schools are organised in one installation, making the Oslo installation one of the largest learning platform installations in the world, reaching a record 1 million log-ins for the month of November 2007 alone.

2. City of Oslo Education Agency (UDE)

The City of Oslo Education Agency is the body responsible for education within the Oslo area.

While the agency has tasked its ICT Department with the administration of the Fronter Learning Platform on behalf of the Oslo schools, there is ongoing cooperation between Fronter and representatives from both the ICT and Pedagogic development. The continuous dialogue with the department for Pedagogic development ensures that the overall goal of making pedagogic use of ICT available to all students continues to be met.

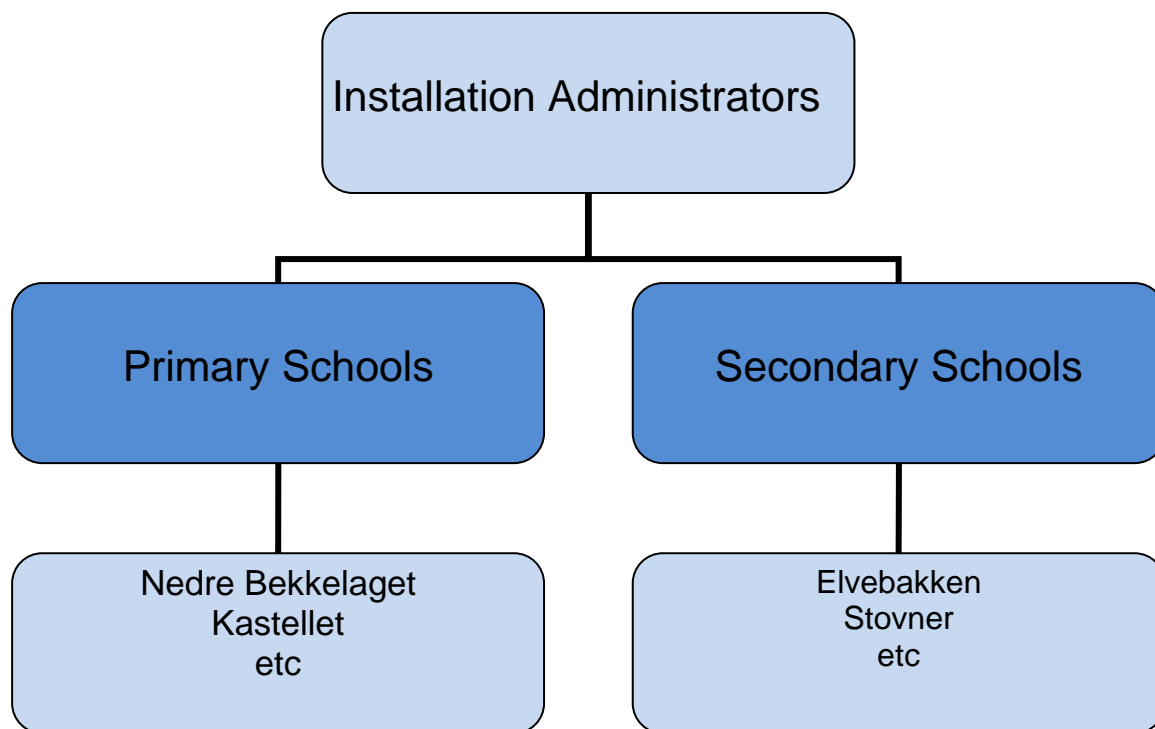


3. Oslo Installation Structure

The two Installation Administrators have unlimited access and are responsible for the administration and upkeep of the Oslo Schools' Fronter Installation at the top level.

The Oslo Installation combines all 177 Oslo schools into a simple structure that classifies schools into either primary or secondary.

At the individual school level, each school nominates a local Fronter administrator to look after that individual school's needs. Each local administrator has access rights limited to their school's 'corridor' within the entire installation.



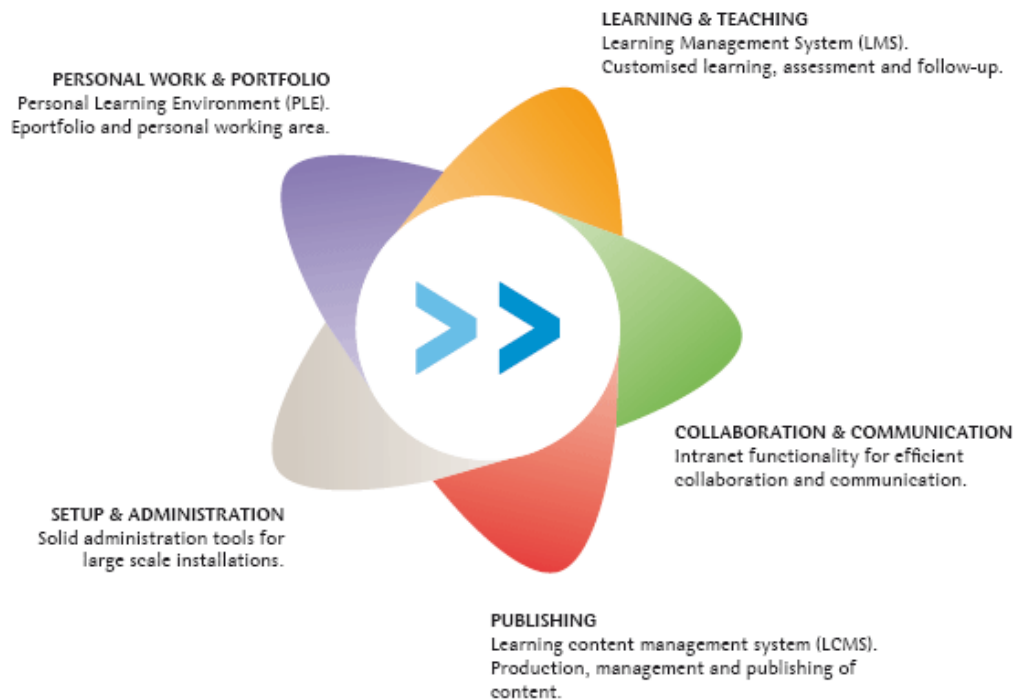
4. Oslo ICT Strategy

In 2002, UDE designed an ICT Strategy called InnsIKT whose main aim was to specify a way to implement ICT as a pedagogical tool in teaching. This strategy would ensure that all students are able to utilize ICT flexibly and purposefully within their daily learning activity.

The InnsIKT strategy covers all 177 Oslo schools and was designed as a 6 step program. With a total budget of NOK 274 million (about EUR 34 million), the strategy covers development in areas such as a central hosting solution, technical equipment, infrastructure, skills development and a common learning platform.

5. Fronter Learning Platform Selection

The Fronter Open Learning Platform was selected by the UDE in 2003, on the grounds that it fulfilled all the requirements set by the new InnsIKT strategy. The Fronter learning platform offers a collection of almost 100 tools developed in close and continuous cooperation with the pedagogic community. The tools are grouped into 5 main functional areas: personal work and e-portfolios, learning management, collaboration, publishing and content management, and administration.



UDE CEO, Astrid Søgne, signs contract to implement the Fronter learning platform in all Oslo schools

6. Implementation Phases

In accordance with the InnsIKT strategy, the Fronter learning platform was bought for all Oslo schools and implemented in 6 defined stages.

In each stage a specified group of schools is selected for concentrated ICT funding and technology implementation. This implementation strategy meant that the Fronter learning platform could be phased into schools, and that both financial and human resources could spend more time attending to individual needs in the different school contexts.

Each phase runs across one school year, and Oslo is currently in the 6th and final stage of implementation.

7. Oslo School Comments from InnsIKT

- Implementation stage 5 (2006-2007*)

“It created new opportunities for differentiated and more efficient teaching methods”

Hovin Lower Secondary School

“As early as the first autumn we could see what a useful tool Fronter is. The platform gave us opportunities that we were not aware existed, both as a pedagogic tool and as a communication channel between teachers and students. We decided this year would be the year of Fronter. ”

Lofsrud Lower Secondary School

“The most important part of InnsIKT V is access to Fronter”

Oppsal Primary and Lower Secondary School

“Fronter was an instant hit. The teachers started using it from day 1. For Fronter to be a good tool it is important to create a good structure around it. This is something we feel we have achieved”

Ullevollsveien School for children with special needs

“The school’s management have insisted that staff use Fronter, and this has been a significant driving force in the implementation process. The first use of Fronter was as an information channel from the school’s administration to the teachers, next came communication between teachers and students, today the platform is fully integrated in the teaching, learning and organization of the school day.”

Marienlyst Primary and Lower Secondary School

8. Training and Skills Development

An important part of the InnsIKT strategy was the training of teachers and staff and the development of an ICT plan for schools. Each school nominates their own local Fronter administrator who is then entitled to comprehensive training given by Fronter Academy** staff.

In addition, UDE carries out their own ICT training which is managed internally by UDE staff. Each school is responsible for organising their own teacher training in Fronter according to their own needs and requirements. As part of the InnsIKT strategy, provision by way of funding is made for additional ICT training of teachers.

9. Oslo UDE Technical Support

As top Oslo Fronter Administrators, Mr Carl Morten Knudsen and Mr Arild Storm provide ongoing communication and information to all the schools in Oslo regarding the Fronter learning platform.

- They ensure that the overall structure of the installation is maintained and common resources on ICT strategy and training is freely available.
- The UDE provides a Service Desk for ICT queries including queries regarding Fronter. This service desk provides first level support for any local administrator queries.
- Common collaboration rooms between schools are also set up to ensure that teachers and staff from across Oslo's schools are able to collaborate and share ideas and resources.

10. Fronter Technical Support

All Fronter customers sign a Service Level Agreement (SLA), which guarantees the customer access to a tight knit support structure.

This support structure consists of:

- Local installation administrators – first port of call for all user queries.
- Local Service Teams operate in all countries where the Fronter product has been implemented.
- A Central Service Desk operates at Fronter Headquarters in Oslo.
- An International Support website is available at support.fronter.com , on which additional queries, information and requests can be made.

As accredited Fronter administrators, local school administrators are able to directly contact the Norwegian Support desk. If an issue is not resolved within a specified time period, the query is passed on to our Fronter Central Service Desk.

11. Fronter – UDE Cooperation

A status meeting is held every month with Fronter and UDE staff, to assess progress made and address any outstanding issues or queries.

An Annual Oslo Schools Conferences enables all Oslo administrators and teachers to meet together to discuss progress and future development plans for the Oslo Fronter Installation as a whole. Future functionality is discussed with information given on product updates, training and support.

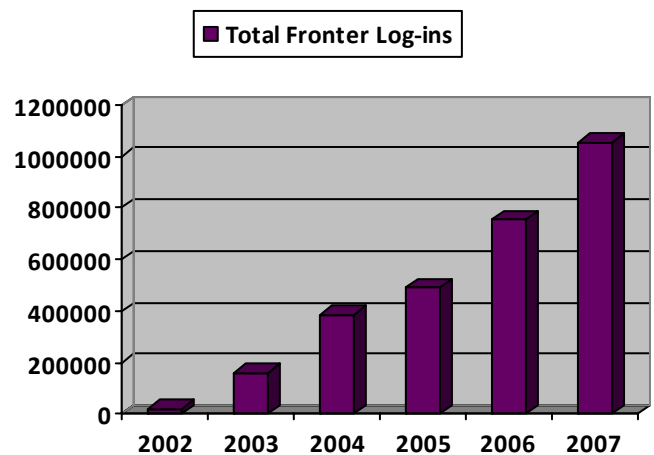
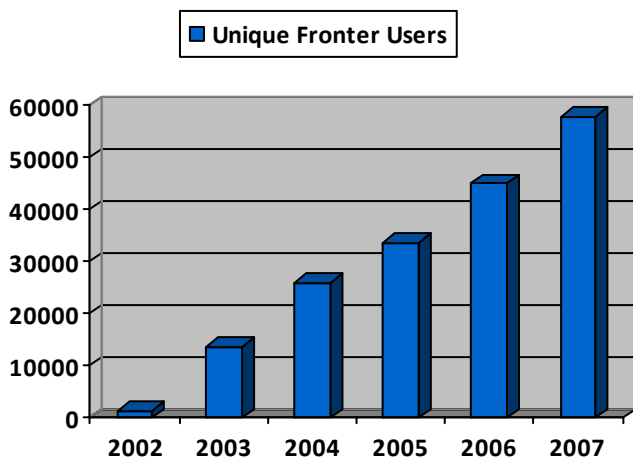
12. Current status of Fronter Implementation

Oslo schools are currently in stage 6 of the InnsIKT implementation process and scheduled to finalize at the end of 2008.

In November 2007 the 177 schools of Oslo reached a record number of total user log-ins – over 1 million log-ins were carried out by 57 000 unique users in November alone.

The graph below shows the increase in Fronter usage since the initial implementation of Fronter in stage 1 schools. Each total is shown for the number of unique and total users in the month of November.

Year	Unique Users	Total Log ins
2007	57 714	1 054 758
2006	44 973	753 362
2005	33 556	490 197
2004	26 070	387 306
2003	13 798	162 184
2002	1 512	20 590



13. Development Plan

The completion of the final stage of InnsIKT at the end of 2008 will not mean the end, but only the beginning of the next stage in the use of the Fronter learning platform by Oslo's schools. Twice a year, Fronter releases new product updates, which aim to continue to incorporate the new and developing needs of the education community.

The Oslo schools contract initially specified basic requirements for the standard platform package, but has since been extended to include a greater list of functionality, giving schools even wider options and flexibility.

New Functionality added:

- ✓ MailFronter
- ✓ WebFronter
- ✓ The Absence module
- ✓ The Evaluation tool
- ✓ Synchronisation
- ✓ Plagiarism control

Fronter offers new training courses associated with new tools and functionality, and continues to work towards providing a product designed to meet the needs of the next generation of learning and collaborating on the web.

14. Conclusion

The InnsIKT strategy was formed in 2002 and soon after in 2003, the Fronter learning platform was selected as a means of achieving the strategy's goals.

With all the Oslo schools now up and running on Fronter in the final stage of the InnsIKT strategy implementation, it is safe to conclude that Fronter has made a substantial impact on teaching and learning activity in the region.

The original InnsIKT ambition to provide all students with pedagogic use of ICT in their daily learning activity is being achieved. This result paves the way for further development and extension of the benefits of ICT in education in the future UDE InnsIKT version 2.

“Fronter is the very heart of our solution,”

Bjørn Marthinsen, ICT Director, City of Oslo Education Agency (UDE)

*Information taken from the InnsIKT V Report published by Oslo UDE

**Fronter Academy is an international training department within Fronter that is responsible for the training and accreditation of Fronter administrators and trainers.