

»»» Improving IT Response



A Wide Network of Users

North Penn's network supports all functions of the school district, from the teachers, labs and individual classrooms, to the administrative systems such as payroll and accounting. Managing the school district's growth – as well as the on-going maintenance of its computer systems and applications – was the driving force behind North Penn School District's move to a desktop management system in June, 2002.

"Our district is one of the largest in Pennsylvania, with over 4,000 computers, 70 servers and 13,500 end users," explains Anthony Cocco, the district's Manager of IT Operations. "Additionally, we support systems that run various internal 'businesses' such as our transportation and food services divisions. And we have many different types of technology labs including music, art, and woodworking. All of our users, from the teachers and administrators, to the students, are connected to the network and share its resources. Since we swap out our computers as soon as they hit three years of age, we needed a way to effectively manage the deployment of over 200 end user applications."

A Seamlessly Integrated Solution

When Cocco arrived at school district headquarters in 2001, he discovered that there was no fully centralized desktop management system in place. That meant that without remote control of the PCs, technicians had to travel throughout the district's 42-square-mile service area to fix the desktops in any number of schools. As a result, the number of users Cocco and his team could service per day was significantly diminished. "And without a method of automatically installing software, we were 're-imaging' systems on an almost weekly basis," he says. "Not only was this manner of managing 4,000 computers and 200 applications inefficient and costly, but it also created slow response times to our open work orders."

For Cocco, improving his department's response to open IT requests was a top priority for the District's CIO, Debbie Cline. At the time, the district was partially using Microsoft's Systems Management Software (SMS). Because it was difficult to use, the staff was not using the application as effectively as possible, prompting Cocco to review other solutions. "I had heard about LANDesk Management Suite from my LANDesk ESP, Sintaks," he recalls. "Together, we

Business Needs

- Cost-effective, automated PC desktop management system for the North Penn School District's vast cross-platform network

Solution

- LANDesk® Management Suite

Business Benefits

- Automating PC lifecycle, significantly increasing ability to handle work orders
- Can create a software package and distribute it with pinpoint accuracy to the exact desktops in minutes
- Software and hardware inventory is automatically updated daily, saving time, as well as many thousands of dollars

did a careful analysis of SMS versus LANDesk Management Suite. And in most areas, LANDesk Management Suite took the top slot. We also visited various organizations that already used LANDesk Management Suite, and did a feature by feature analysis and demo. I took three of my top engineers to the demo to ensure that they were happy with the performance of LANDesk Management Suite as well.” Once Cocco and his team selected LANDesk Management Suite, the race was on, since the implementation had to be done over the short summer months when the schools were closed. Thanks to its seamless integration, implementation of LANDesk Management Suite was straightforward. “I am very happy to report that the project was completed on-time and under budget,” says Cocco.

Easy to Manage and Use

High on North Penn School District's list of priorities was a means to more efficiently install the school district's applications, nor was Cocco interested in speed at the risk of sacrificing quality. Prior to implementing LANDesk Management Suite, if Cocco wanted to roll out a new program, his team had to either install it manually, or push an entire image across the district's 4,000 desktops – including both Mac* and PC systems. Additionally, he needed a quick, easy way to perform district-wide inventories of the software and hardware currently in use.

Our inventories used to be out of date as soon as we completed them,” he says. “With LANDesk Management Suite, the inventory is automatically updated daily. The cost savings of that feature alone have saved us thousands of dollars. We are able to manage our licenses better and compliance is no longer an issue. As for service, by remote controlling the desktops, we have increased our ability to handle work orders by 37%. And LANDesk Management Suite was the only product that handled our Mac clients as well as our PC clients.”

LANDesk Management Suite's advanced and comprehensive configuration management tools, particularly its application packaging and distribution, allowed Cocco to automate the PC lifecycle – a true benefit in a K-12 school district. “In terms of the time/cost savings of the application distribution function, we have shaved weeks off of the process,” notes Cocco. “Now, we can create a software package and distribute it – in minutes – with pinpoint accuracy to the exact desktops needed.”

Realizing the Benefits of LANDesk Management Suite

One of the most impressive results of the North Penn School District's new LANDesk Management Suite solution can be seen in how much more Cocco can do with less. “Our entire support procedures have changed for the better. Instead of having a staff of ‘imagers,’ we can perform services with just a single employee,” he says. “This will save thousands of dollars as we rollout our new PCs. Our plan is to go to Windows XP and LANDesk Management Suite will be invaluable for this project.”

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