

An entire school year without workstation maintenance?

Sisters School District saves valuable time, resources and money with NComputing.

Challenges

- Poor computer performance, including login times of five minutes or more
- Difficult to manage and maintain workstations
- Aging PCs in need of a refresh with limited budget and resources

Solution

- L300 virtual desktop client devices

Results

- Reduced login times from five minutes or more to one minute or less
- A scalable thin client solution at half the cost per seat compared to traditional PCs
- Staff can spend more time focusing on big picture items instead of workstation maintenance



Old, slow and difficult to support school computers in desperate need of attention

Sisters School District was doing its best to support an aging set of computers across its school campuses, but with devices that were 10-12 years old and running Windows XP there was only so much that could be done. The number of computers was dwindling as they ceased operation and those that continued to work were plagued with outdated software and poor performance, drawing complaints from the teachers and students using them.

The desktop computers within Sisters School District were slow and getting slower -- the result of numerous software upgrades over the years. It took at least five minutes for students to be able to use the computers and combined with a myriad of other problems it was often 10-15 minutes before a class lesson could start, taking away valuable education time from students and creating frustration among teachers.

Support for the aging computers was impacting Sisters School District's IT staff as well, adversely affecting support times and prohibiting the team from focusing on proactive issues. Since the computers were old and slow, maintenance updates took a long time and the frequency of updates was becoming greater. A software update could take hours and after completion every computer had to be inspected to ensure it was operational and the installation was successful. This process could occur as much as once or twice a week.

"The classroom computers took a huge amount of time to keep updated and running," said Todd Pilch, Technology Director of Sisters School District. "We were spending a lot of time doing updates to all of the machines and we were also doing a lot of break/fix work in between. Between the old computers and our small team we weren't able to deliver the experience we wanted for our users."

The situation finally pushed Sisters School District to address the situation beyond continuing the old computers. The IT team initially considered replacing the PCs with tablets, but decided that they would not meet user needs. Next they turned their attention toward PC replacement and quickly realized how expensive new desktop computers and hardware would be. Then they explored thin computing and did a trial of *NComputing* L300 thin client devices.



Located in the heart of Central Oregon, nestled in the Cascade Mountain range just east of the Three Sisters mountains and 20 miles northwest of Bend, Sisters School District is comprised of three schools (elementary, middle and high school) plus its alternative programs for high school students. With over 1,150 students, Sisters schools maintain the highest of education standards offering a well-balanced mixture of core academic classes along with a variety of elective classes and co-curricular programs at the middle and high school level.

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Todd Pilch
Technology Director of Sisters
School District

Thin client solution a refreshing choice for computer replacement

Sisters School District performed a thorough test and evaluation of the L300’s and found that everything worked well within its environment including the delivery of new applications, the installation of updates and overall performance. In calculating the cost of a deployment, the district determined that a PC replacement would be \$700-\$1,000 per desktop versus approximately \$400 a piece for the thin client solution including servers, 19” LCD monitors, hardware and licensing. Thin clients would also require much less power consumption, which was another big advantage over traditional PCs. The total lower cost of ownership led Sisters School District to purchase 100 L300’s.



Streamlined: Smaller workstations, less heat generation & no fan noise creates a superior learning environment.

The installation process was quick and simple, requiring the removal of all the old equipment and configuration of the servers before setting the new monitors and L300s in place. The results were immediate and impactful. “Now we can leave the computers on to allow for immediate logon and seconds later any program can be up and running on the desktop,” said Pilch. “We’ve gone from logon times of five minutes or more to less than 10 seconds. It’s a totally amazing transformation from what we had previously.”

Maintenance and support for the L300’s has become much easier for Sisters School District since OS updates and new programs are done at the server level rather than each computer. Additionally, the workstation footprint got smaller with just a monitor and keyboard, allowing for more workspace per station and ultimately more computers per lab. Another benefit is that computer labs don’t heat up anymore—a result of the elimination of CPU’s which require more energy and generate much more heat.

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Since the initial implementation of the L300 units, Sisters School District has purchased and deployed more units across its campuses, and has plans to deploy even more until it has replaced all of the old computers.