NComputing™

CASE STUDY EDUCATION

Low-cost computing for education

New Zealand school slashes truancy rates

Challenge

Engage disinterested students using computers with a limited budget and a limited number of PCs.

Solution

Deploy NComputing X-series virtual desktops to triple computer access at a very low cost.

Impact

Reduced truancy rates from 30% to 10%. With the school now able to provide one computer for every two students, the students showed much more interest in class work.

Partner

Driven and supported by Brera ICT Solutions, an NComputing partner that focuses on business and educational solutions.

Glenavon School in Auckland, New Zealand provides primary education to children from a lower-income, ethnically diverse neighborhood. The students were disinterested in the traditional teaching environment and the teachers struggled to engage them. Truancy rates would reach 30% on certain days. In order to create a more engaging learning environment, the school wanted to integrate e-learning into the curriculum. But the best they could do was to have the students take turns on a limited number of PCs in the classrooms.

Glenavon students enjoy computer access in the classroom using NComputing.

Math problem: how to triple computers without more funding?

Glenavon wanted to triple the number of computers in the classrooms, but had a very tight budget. Purchasing all new PCs was certainly out of the question. Leasing was considered, but again, Glenavon's budget was not large enough to lease so many PCs.

Answer: virtual desktops from NComputing

When NComputing partner Brera ICT Solutions heard about Glenavon's dilemma, they knew that NComputing was an ideal solution. That's because NComputing virtual desktops enable schools to get the most out of their computer investments by sharing their excess power with up to 11 students at a very low cost.

"Why should kids be restricted to using computer labs? They shouldn't! Computers should be accessible to every student."

ELAINE HERBERT
PRINCIPAL
GLENOVAN SCHOOL

The NComputing solution is based on a simple fact: today's PCs are so powerful that the vast majority of applications only use a small fraction of the computer's capacity. NComputing's virtualization software and hardware tap this unused capacity so that multiple students can simultaneously share it. Each student's monitor, keyboard, and mouse connect to the shared computer through a small and very durable NComputing access device. The access device itself has no CPU, memory or moving parts so it is rugged, durable, and easy to deploy and maintain.

"We presented the solution to Glenavon and they recognized this as the right way to give their kids access to updated technology at affordable prices. The trial went remarkably well, so Glenavon went ahead with the project," said James Robinson, Technical Manager of Brera.

The significant cost reduction from NComputing's X-series meant that Glenavon could afford to increase computer access without breaking their budget. The ease of maintenance was also extremely attractive. Teachers no longer wasted valuable classroom time troubleshooting computer issues, allowing them to concentrate on helping students.

Extra credit: students are excited to learn

The deployment of the NComputing X-series enabled the school to triple the number of workstations, providing one computer per two students in every classroom. The school even had sufficient budget left over to improve its network infrastructure.

"Our kids never had to use 'pencil' labs—such an idea is ridiculous, as pencils are readily available to every student. So why should kids be restricted to using computer labs? They shouldn't! Computers should be accessible to every student, too. Eventually, we want to provide one-to-one access for our kids," said Ms. Elaine Herbert, Principal, Glenavon School.

With the new computing infrastructure, students were more engaged in the learning process. Truancy rates declined from 30% to 10%—a remarkable improvement for the school and for the students.

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