



SUCCESS STORY

Ma'arif Group improves effectiveness and efficiency of computer labs in 25 schools across Saudi Arabia with NComputing

The Challenge

Managing computer labs in multiple schools across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Solution

NComputing vSpace Platform:
vSpace Server with L300 thin clients

The Benefits

- Unified and centralised management and support for 70 labs across multiple locations
- Superior user experience with high performance for multimedia applications
- Ability to scale effectively and quickly to additional locations
- Reduced deployment time with ability to configure and deploy hundreds of virtual desktops in days rather than weeks
- Cost effective solution with reduced desktop acquisition and management costs

Ma'arif for Education and Training consists of more than 80 schools throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and provides a comprehensive service, which includes the management and operation of schools for others. Ma'arif has a renowned educational reputation, providing diverse national and international education programs and courses as well as providing specialised academic training programs.

More than 23,000 students are enrolled in Ma'arif for Education & Training schools and the company employs more than 2,800 employees, teachers and administrative staff. Manarat Schools, Al-Faisaliah Islamic School, Green Hills International Schools and Noor Al-Islam Schools are all affiliates of Ma'arif for Education & Training.

Ma'arif Group mission for education in Saudi Arabia

Ma'arif for Education & Training adopts the latest learning techniques and teaching strategies that result in a high level of satisfaction and performance among all those involved in their education and training programs.

A significant service provided by Ma'arif for Education & Training, under the leadership of Eng. Abdullah Omran, PMP, IT Manager, is the management and operation of the IT infrastructure that is delivering the most up-to-date computer labs and technologies for Ma'arif for Education & Training schools across the kingdom. The program of "Smart Education" includes management and development of the Computer Labs, the Ma'arif for Education & Training Learning Gateway, which enables parents to monitor and follow up with their children, the School Management System, a program that saves all data relating to both students and parents, 24/7 online access to Britannica Encyclopedia and interactive white boards.



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Eng. Abdullah Omran
PMP, IT Manager

Computer labs challenged with unreliable PCs

Mr. Abdallah Omran and his team develop and manage computer labs in multiple schools across 25 campuses. The computer labs have high levels of utilisation, as, in addition to computer courses, they are used for exams, for students' research and for extra-curricular activities. Before the deployment of NComputing, the computer labs contained standalone PCs on a local network and

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they were managed and supported by a number of dedicated technical teams that supported a number of schools. There were a number of challenges with this set up:

- The PCs were unreliable and required almost continuous repair and maintenance. Given the number and disparate locations of the schools, there were inevitable delays in fixing the issues. So at best, lessons were interrupted, which was frustrating for teachers and students and, at worst, students could not finish their work and in some cases were even unable to complete their exams.
- Maintenance and software upgrades for the PCs were time consuming and challenging as the Technical Support teams in the schools were not necessarily highly qualified IT personnel.
- Multimedia content, especially video, is a growing requirement in Education. With the PC infrastructure the performance was so poor that it was unusable.
- The acquisition cost of PCs, as well as the cost and regularity of PC refresh cycles, was starting to become a consideration. Budget could be much better spent on tools and technologies that improved the education programs and learning.

NComputing makes the grade



“Centralised control for supporting and maintaining the 70 computer labs over multiple locations was the main driver for this project.” Eng. Abdullah Omran, PMP, IT Manager explains. “This needed to be combined with a simple solution within each school so that local support staff can easily manage. 100% uptime and excellent performance are essential as online content and assessment, multimedia and collaborative portals are ever increasing. Ma’arif for Education & Training recently adopted centralized digital exams for all students.”

Mr Abdullah Omran engaged the services of Virtual Tech for Information Technology EST., a trusted and Authorised Gold Partner for *NComputing* in Saudi Arabia. Virtual Tech. implemented 2 computer labs as a pilot project, in order to replace the traditional PCs. One of Ma’arif’s conditions was that the *NComputing L300* devices should operate with excellent multi-media performance. Virtual Tech. took the challenge and by the end of the pilot project the Ma’arif Team were impressed as they were able to play HD video on all *NComputing L300* terminals with excellent performance and speed. This pilot project demonstrated practically that *NComputing* was the best solution for Ma’arif for Education & Training.



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NComputing's vSpace solution with its' L300 also offers "session virtualisation" rather than full VDI. This allows Ma'arif for Education & Training to run one standard version of an operating system from central vSpace server in each lab, which can be accessed by multiple users. A standardised desktop, as well as a set of applications are delivered to students and teachers in each of the 70 computer labs. This allows Ma'arif for Education & Training to control and support all computer labs centrally, which is quick, effective and minimizes any downtime.

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Eng. Abdullah Omran
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Virtual Tech for Information Technology EST., with the support of NComputing, was able to adapt the 'British Council' Online Exam application to meet Ma'arif's requirement, and adapted the non multi-user software for Ma'arif's smart boards 'QOMO' to work perfectly in a multi-user environment.

Virtual Tech for Information Technology EST. then proposed and managed a comprehensive rollout plan for the NComputing solution, initially for 50 computer labs. Set up was simple with 30 labs deployed in just 3 months including building the networks in all the labs. NComputing was quickly adopted by both students and teachers, as the solution actually performed better than the PCs both in speed of use and in multi-media performance.

Mr Abdullah Omran estimates that technical problems within the labs are now fixed in minutes rather than days and is impressed with NComputing's unique architecture that ensures almost 100% uptime, guaranteeing uninterrupted usage. For the support teams in the schools, the solution is simple to manage and now each team is managing just one or two servers, not 28 PCs.

In addition, Ma'arif for Education & Training are also benefiting from a more cost effective solution. The savings on hardware as well as the savings on support and maintenance are significant.

Looking to the future

Ma'arif for Education & Training schools now have the most effective and efficient computer labs to deliver the very latest in learning techniques and teaching strategies. Mr Abdulla Omran summarises, "We are pleased to partner with NComputing for this project and going forward. The combination of NComputing's vSpace solution with Ma'arif for Education & Training's world-class education services has been a winning combination for this initiative. We plan to equip all our computer labs with the NComputing L300 over the coming months. We are looking forward to the continued positive benefits for Ma'arif for Education & Training, and most importantly, for the schools, teachers and students."

Partner



Virtual Tech for Information
Technology EST.
Saudi Arabia