

Low-cost computing for education.

Wiltshire school saves money and finds 'only positive differences'

Challenge

To increase ICT access and upgrade technology without an undue burden on budget or the environment.

Solution

Replace Staverton's entire suite of 30 aging PCs with NComputing's X-series.

Impact

Dramatically reduced carbon emissions and costs, increased access and reliability. Savings make Staverton eligible for an Eco-Schools award and provide budget to increase staffing levels.

Partner

kl ltd *KL Ltd, a UK-based premier NComputing partner specialising in the provision of desktop virtualisation and IT security solutions, provided pre- and post-sales services in, including installation at Staverton Primary.*

Bruce Douglas, head teacher at Staverton Primary School in Wiltshire enjoys the challenge of trying out new ideas that can improve the learning environment for his pupils, and the teaching environment for his staff. When first made aware of desktop virtualisation from NComputing he immediately saw an opportunity to meet a number of school targets through deploying a technology that could improve how ICT is delivered at the school.



NComputing "does what it says on the tin"!

Lower costs, easier to manage

Knowing Staverton's commitment to improving their learning environment, KL, an NComputing partner, approached Douglas with the NComputing solution. "I was aware of thin-client technology, but was concerned about the cost and reliability," explained Douglas. "However, the principles on which it is based are very appealing so I thought that we should take a look."

KL, confident that Staverton would be satisfied, installed and set up NComputing virtual desktops at the school for a three-week evaluation period. Staverton created ten new virtual desktops alongside their traditional desktops. "The performance was at least as good as the PCs, but a lot cheaper and easier to run and manage," explained Douglas.

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BRUCE DOUGLAS
HEAD TEACHER
STAVERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

“The only differences are positive”

Recognising the value and ease-of-use of virtualization technology, Staverton replaced all of the desktop PCs in their ICT area with the NComputing X-series—and the difference is dramatic. With 30 workstations available for pupils, Staverton has one of the most environmentally-friendly ICT suites in the country.

Douglas sees no difference in performance compared to standard PCs and remarks that the only differences are positive. “No noise from whirring PC cooling fans, more space on and under the desks without PC towers, fewer pupil-originated hardware problems, and more time for teaching,” says Douglas. “The cost and carbon benefits will be seen clearly in our finances, environment ratings and maybe even at our next OFSTED [educational inspection reports]!”

The NComputing solution works because today’s PCs are so powerful that the vast majority of applications only use a small fraction of the computer’s capacity. NComputing’s hardware and vSpace™ virtualisation software tap into this unused capacity so that it can be simultaneously shared by multiple pupils. Each pupil’s monitor, keyboard, and mouse connect to the shared PC through a small and very durable NComputing access device. The access device itself has no CPU, memory, or moving parts—so it’s rugged, reliable, and easy to deploy and maintain. By spreading out the cost of the shared computer, schools can provide up to five times the number of stations for the same money.

Environment and budget-friendly upgrade

Staverton appreciated the environmental benefits of NComputing’s greener computing solution but they were also impressed with the impact these benefits had on their budgets. NComputing access devices draw only 3% of the electricity used by traditional PCs, dramatically reducing the school’s energy bills along with its carbon footprint. Over the previous five years, the electricity cost of running 30 desktop computers cost Staverton approximately £3,000, emitting nearly 15 tonnes of carbon emissions. With NComputing over the same period, the cost would have been approximately £100 and carbon emissions would have been reduced to less than ½ tonne, reducing costs and carbon emissions by 97%. The solid-state units also produce virtually no heat, eliminating the need for air conditioning and further reducing energy bills and carbon emissions.

Also interested in reducing their e-waste, Staverton was happy to learn that since NComputing’s access devices last approximately ten years and weigh less than 150 grams, they are equivalent to half a percent of the waste generated by traditional PCs during the same time period.

“I am planning on introducing more NComputing access devices in each classroom so that we can further integrate ICT into the learning and teaching experience,” said Douglas. “The fact that we can do this with almost zero impact on the environment and for a price that makes it easy to fit into our stretched budgets make this technology a real no-brainer for us—and for every school.”

