

Low-cost computing for governments

Library expands computer access and cuts support costs

Challenge

Provide reliable computing access throughout the library system while cutting costs.

Solution

Deploy the NComputing L-series throughout the library.

Impact

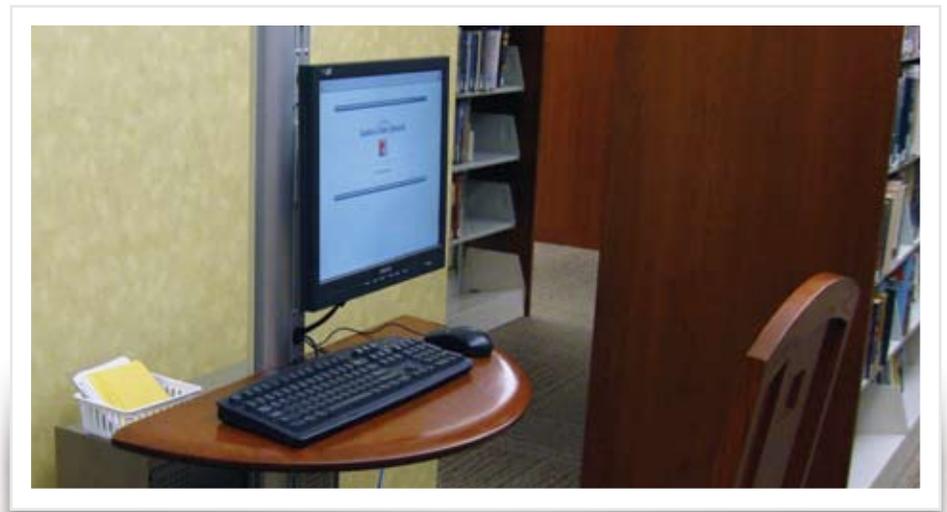
Reduced hardware costs by more than \$17,000 in initial deployments. Improved reliability and reduced IT support calls.

Partner

PC Mall, an NComputing Platinum partner, supported the deployment.

In just a few short months, Hamilton East Public Library, with two branches in central Indiana, had five PCs used for accessing the online public access catalog (OPAC) overheat and fail. The OPAC PCs were kept in locked cabinets for security purposes, with monitors mounted on poles at each station. With little ventilation, heat built up in the cabinets, drastically shortening PC life.

With tight budgets and a two-person IT staff, the library needed to find a cost-effective solution that required little support. Systems department head Rob Brown went online to research options and checked with colleagues for recommendations. Both paths led him to NComputing. "Traditional thin clients cost too much. Plus, our Windows-based software won't work on proprietary platforms," said Mr. Brown. "We wanted to add more OPAC access without increasing our budget."



Hamilton East Public Library replaced existing desktops with NComputing.

Mr. Brown contacted PC Mall, an NComputing reseller. "After talking to Rob, I knew NComputing was a perfect fit for their situation," said PC Mall sales rep Tim Rivard. "We talked about power consumption, heat generation, and the fact that using a PC at every station was overkill. When we listed the NComputing features and figured out the cost difference compared to dedicated PCs, I knew it wouldn't be long before they made their decision."

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ROB BROWN
SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT HEAD
HAMILTON EAST PUBLIC LIBRARY

A very cool solution

“Simple setup, more access stations at a fraction of the cost, and support time slashed. Needless to say, we went with NComputing,” said Mr. Brown. NComputing virtual desktops are perfect for libraries because today’s PCs are so powerful that the vast majority of applications only use a small fraction of the computer’s capacity. NComputing taps this unused capacity so it can be simultaneously shared by multiple users. Each user’s monitor, keyboard and mouse connect to the shared PC through the small and very durable NComputing access device, and every user has their own settings and applications, so they feel as though they are working on their own machine. The NComputing access device itself has no CPU, memory or moving parts, so it’s rugged, durable and easy to deploy. By spreading out the cost of the shared PC over many users, libraries can provide four times the number of computing stations for the same budget.

“Before NComputing, our PCs would draw up to 200 watts of power each. That’s expensive, and generates a lot of heat,” said Mr. Brown. “With NComputing, each access device uses just 5 watts. That’s a huge electricity savings. Then there’s the savings in cooling costs. With NComputing devices replacing the PCs in the cabinets, heat failure has been eliminated. Deploying NComputing was simple, too—less than half an hour per machine from start to finish, including pulling down the old PC. That’s fast.”

Unbeatable value: NComputing and Microsoft Server

Over 40 more NComputing L-series are now deployed as OPAC stations, with 20 OPAC stations in one building connected to a single PC running Microsoft Windows Server. “We eliminated 50 PCs – that’s \$17,000 just in hardware costs,” added Mr. Brown. “We also saved a fortune in software costs. While there’s a perception that server software is more expensive, Microsoft offers substantial discounts to public libraries through its academic licensing programs. We only needed 2 operating system licenses for the servers and 50 very affordable Microsoft client access licenses. Combining Microsoft Server with NComputing brings the cost of computer access lower than any other comparable solution.”

“Maintenance and support is a snap,” said Mr. Brown. “Patches, reconfigurations and software updates take minutes because we only deal with the shared PC. And the NComputing devices are so durable, I expect them to last for years. NComputing has a much lower total cost of ownership.”

A reference for success

Hamilton East is deploying NComputing throughout its system. The library chose the NComputing L-series for its subscription database stations because it features a USB port for users to save their work to a storage device. The 60 station public computer lab will be outfitted with the NComputing X-series which has a low \$70 per-user cost.

