

Application Virtualization Delivers Cost-saving IT Solution for Georgia's K-12 Peach County Education District



Business Needs

- ☐ Deliver educational software from Central IT to 18 locations
- ☐ Provide central IT management for 2000 endpoints
- ☐ Meet need for uniform technical teaching and training
- ☐ Reduce cost of software distribution during systems and hardware update
- ☐ Find a solution that wouldn't require intensive implementation or training
- ☐ Find a solution that could provide mobile access
- ☐ Find a solution that eases future system and software upgrades

Solution

InstallFree Bridge for Application Virtualization

A district-wide strategic program for virtualization of educational software applications was implemented using InstallFree to achieve central distribution and management of nearly 2000 end points. With more than 3500 computer users, the rollout delivered applications to 18 computing labs with a 3:1 ratio of K-12 students, instructors and administrators per application, along with mobile access.

The Challenge

In early 2009 Peach County Schools was faced with needed hardware replacements and a desktop refresh because of dated equipment. The project would be operating under budget constraints, and the added time pressure of a shorter school week—four days instead of five—adopted by the district to reduce costs.

Over 1500 new laptop and desktop computers were being added to 500 others purchased in 2008. A wireless network for all the schools was nearing completion. The program goal was to provide student mobility and wide access to computer-based education and training for all schools, in order to deliver uniformly high standards of technical knowledge across the district. The IT objective was to reduce the cost and complexity of serving the laptops, while building the foundation for efficient operations in the years to come.

The innovative program was a strategic implementation developed by Charlie Waters, Director of Technology of Peach County Schools and Dr. Susan Clark, Superintendent of Schools for Peach County, who shared the vision for improved learning and cost savings achieved by raising the level of educational technology. The Board of Education approved a budget to include the needed upgrades and also fund the program to replace the district's system computers in the schools and central office over a five-year period.

The Search

"We knew that any gap in access would be a disadvantage for students and teachers, and went to work on an application virtualization scenario to provide even use of resources," said Waters. He knew that virtualization technology could provide the efficiencies of central distribution and application management for the mobile access while achieving both offline and online PC configuration management. It would be a powerful innovation for the progressive Peach County IT services. All of the work and investment in the immediate project would deliver advantages and costs savings well into the future.

The Solution

Waters looked at several vendors responding to the district's RFP. After considerable research, Peach County chose InstallFree because of its unique architecture for application virtualization. The solution provided centralized management control to address the challenges around mobility and security, and the efficient approach could also reduce the overall costs.

Results

The district-wide program completed its first-phase in June 2009, achieving cost-effective rapid deployment. Implementing InstallFree at the central IT system delivers virtual applications of student educational software to nearly 2000 endpoints, allowing central distribution and management. The rollout provides applications to 18 computing labs with a 3:1 ratio of K-12 students, instructors and administrators per application.



Business Benefits

- ☐ Achieved central IT software distribution at low cost
- ☐ Implementation was easy, beat competitors and was less expensive
- ☐ Rapid implementation and improved IT efficiency
- ☐ Achieved wide access and uniform user experience within budget
- ☐ IT ready for future growth and system migrations (Windows 7)

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Returning Exceptional Value

Saving Time and Money

"The strategic value of InstallFree in the planned implementation helped us to realize our vision," said Waters. "They delivered on their promise. Today we have an easy-to-manage, progressive and cost-effective educational tool for our students."

Student Access to Centralized, Virtual Applications for Go-Anywhere Study

Users have access to their personalized applications on laptops no matter which of the 18 lab locations they use. The software looks and feels and performs the same each time a user logs in; they have a consistent experience to help accelerate learning. InstallFree changed the economics of mobile computing for Peach County, providing the high quality security and management benefits of locked-down PCs, without sacrificing user autonomy and mobility.

Improved Management

In addition to doing more with the same number of IT staff, other savings benefits include license savings from central application tracking and license control. Software and system upgrades are also more efficient, since the InstallFree virtual applications are not dependent on the underlying OS. Now, IT managers can deliver applications across a range of desktop environments without conflict, saving time during migrations.

An Eye to the Future

Meeting Growth Challenges

With the application virtualization in central IT, management of the distributed desktops can be more efficient and less costly. InstallFree allows Peach County to meet its goal to deliver wide access and a uniform computer experience for its users across the district. As the systems and hardware continue to be replaced and upgraded, the incremental effort is minimal, even when moving to new versions of the operating system. The wireless system readily manages remote desktops using InstallFree, which links both the PC *and* the User to the virtual application. The teaching benefits of the student laptops can now be easily managed to keep pace with growth.

InstallFree Key Benefits:

Lower Desktop TCO While Increasing Productivity:

Organizations can lock-down corporate PCs while users gain admin-like privileges from within their virtual application enabling them to work without limitations

Increase Security:

Applications operate in a sealed environment that is not impacted by other applications or by OS changes

Simplify Application Delivery & Management Tasks:

Simplifies software delivery, updating, patching and extensions while eliminating the need to install applications

Eliminate Application Conflict:

InstallFree Virtual (IFV) Applications run simultaneously with conflicting applications and in non-compliant computing environments eliminating the need for long regression testing cycles

Improve Deployment Flexibility:

Supports application patching and changes on-the-fly with no need to re-pack the base application



"The strategic value in the planned implementation was a perfect fit, helping to realize our vision. They delivered far more than mere RFP promise, and we have a progressive and cost-effective educational tool for our students."

— Charlie Waters
Director of Technology
Peach County Schools



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