



MICDS powers the classroom with Dell KACE Appliances



Customer profile

MICDS

Mary Institute and Saint Louis Country Day School

Company Mary Institute and Saint Louis Country Day School
Industry Education
Country United States
Employees 169 faculty and staff; 1,233 students
Website www.micds.org

Challenge

Mary Institute and Saint Louis Country Day School (MICDS) places an emphasis on technology as a means of delivering its day-to-day curriculum. The IT team lacked a systems management solution to efficiently reimage and service the growing number of student-assigned laptops and PC tablets.

Solution

MICDS leveraged Dell KACE Appliances to annually reimage several hundred laptops, and streamlined its service desk, asset inventory and other systems management tasks to ensure technology remained a core delivery component of the institution's curriculum.

Save time. Save your organization.

- Reduced time spent on imaging from months to weeks
- Reduced service desk calls by 56 percent
- Experienced nearly 700 percent return on investment
- Appliance paid for itself in less than four months

"We selected Dell KACE because of its ease of use. We wanted a simple solution that didn't require two to three weeks of set up and training and really liked the fact that we could do the set up on our own."

*Tom Wyman, Director of IT,
MICDS*

Founded in 1859 Mary Institute and Saint Louis Country Day School (MICDS) is an independent, preparatory school offering non-sectarian education to students regardless of origin, race or religion. MICDS consists of three schools; junior kindergarten through grade four; a middle school for grades 5-8; and an upper school for grades nine through 12.

“As a manager I’m constantly tracking the number of service tickets and their progress. The Dell KACE K1000 Appliance has enabled us to provide automated notifications to students and faculty throughout the lifecycle of a ticket, eliminating the need for my team to send personalized emails notifying users’ of a ticket status. It’s just been a huge time saver.”

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Recognized as one of the nation’s leaders in independent education, technology is a key component of the day-to-day curriculum delivery in the classroom and allows MICDS to differentiate and individualize instruction.

Beginning in grade five, all students are assigned a personal laptop or tablet PC to help assist with classroom with projects such as creating multimedia presentations, writing blogs and producing podcasts. In addition, the school has five computer labs and 169 faculty and staff all of which have access to a PC utilizing both Mac OS X Leopard and Microsoft® Windows 7 operating systems.

Managing more than 1,600 end points can be a challenge for any organization. However MICDS’s 10-person IT team faced an even bigger challenge because student-assigned laptops and tablet PCs had to be wiped and reimaged each year in preparation for the upcoming school year. Additionally, MICDS was also working to streamline their service desk in order to address service requests in a timely manner. This was critical to ensuring laptops and tablets were available for students to use for their assignments; the IT team knew they needed to find a solution.

MICDS reduces reimaging time from months to weeks

To make their selection, the MICDS IT team developed an evaluation score card which ranked systems management solutions including Altiris, LANDesk, Zen Works and Dell KACE. It was important

that the solution the team selected provide multi-platform support (Mac/ PC) and include imaging, asset and inventory management, service desk and remote installation capabilities. After a lengthy and thorough evaluation MICDS selected the Dell KACE K1000 Management Appliance and K2000 Deployment Appliance.

“We were really looking for the Swiss Army knife of systems management solutions and heard about Dell KACE after one of our network administrators mentioned he read about it in a magazine. We did a live demo, and it quickly became a real contender in our selection process,” said Ron Falkoff, systems analyst for MICDS. “The problem with the other solutions we evaluated was a lot of them didn’t work with Mac which is a significant portion of our endpoints, and were larger scale than what we needed. Dell KACE fit right into our sweet spot.”

“We selected Dell KACE because of its ease of use. As we were looking at our pain points we wanted a simple solution that didn’t require two to three weeks of set up and training,” said Tom Wyman,

Technology at work

Hardware

Dell KACE™ K1000 Management Appliance

Dell KACE K2000 Deployment Appliance

director of IT for MICDS. "We really liked the fact that we could do the set up on our own."

The first project MICDS leveraged KACE for was its annual reimaging of its 900 student-assigned laptops and PC tablets which had previously been done using Ghost. The team manages 10 to 12 active images on its PCs and another four to five on its Mac endpoints. Each endpoint houses a variety of applications such as Microsoft Office, DyKnow, Movie Maker and more than 65 education applications on a typical student machine.

"We had a month and a half to reimage our student assigned machines before the start of the school year. Since we were able to hit the ground running with the Dell KACE K2000 Appliance, we literally took our reimaging time from months to three weeks," said Wyman.

MICDS particularly liked the flexibility KACE provided to create custom images or use pre-configured images as they often found than an image was stale before they even deployed.

MICDS cuts number of service desk calls by 56 percent with Dell KACE

Alongside its reimaging project, MICDS wanted to streamline its service desk to help better address issues and boost response time to tickets. On average the team was seeing 200 to 300 service desk resolutions per month which went undocumented, hindering end user productivity and insight into the organization's pain points.

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In fact, with the Dell KACE ticketing interface, MICDS has slashed the number of phone calls to its service desk by 56 percent.

"Before Dell KACE we used to spend a lot more time chasing down people and issues, and an open ticket would often get lost in the shuffle as a result," said Falkoff. "With the K1000 Appliance we now have two service desks with four dedicated FTEs that can troubleshoot any issues, which has not only improved our response and first-pass resolution rates, but also lets students and faculty quickly get back to the business of learning."

Dell KACE helps evolve approach to systems management

Since deployment of the Dell KACE Appliances MICDS is finding new ways to leverage the solution within its organization.

"Dell KACE's agent-based approach is a major plus and helps us keep track of machines on or off campus to ensure patching, tracking inventory, uptime and trouble shooting," said Wyman. "In fact we've had machines stolen and gotten them back when the KACE agents checked in. We just keep finding new uses for it every day."

In fact MICDS leveraged Dell KACE for a large wireless upgrade project in summer 2011 in which Wyman's team deployed wireless keys through the K1000 Management Appliance, to ensure they got to the right groups of faculty and students. Additionally, the IT team is in midst of using the K1000 to create a central repository of its audio/visual (AV) assets to aid in inventory control in the case of component failures, and to help meet the goal that AV systems are configured the same way in each classroom.

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