

Dell KACE passes test for effective systems management at St. Hilda's High School



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*Lee Ellis, Network Manager,
St. Hilda's High School*

Customer Profile

Industry:	Education
Country:	England
Students:	1,000
Web:	www.st-hildas.com

Business Need

Because the number of desktop and laptop machines had grown, the challenge of keeping the applications and operating systems at the correct version was also becoming increasingly difficult. The utilities that had been used for these tasks did not perform acceptably on larger volumes of machines, leading to additional manual work for the IT team to ensure that systems were up to date.

Solution

St. Hilda's High School deployed Dell KACE™ Appliances to automate its management and deployment tasks. The KACE Appliances provide all the functionality that the school requires in one place, which greatly reduces the IT team's system management overhead.



Save Time. Save Your Organization Money.

- 2 days to deploy 160 system images versus 3 weeks
- More than £30,000 ROI during the first year
- £4,500 per year saved on licenses by replacing 5 different software solutions
- £12,000 saved by not having to purchase separate help desk software
- Projected £8,000 in power savings from being able to power down 500 machines each night

St. Hilda's Church of England High School is a voluntary-aided comprehensive school for girls based in Liverpool, UK. Founded in 1894, the school now supports around 1,000 pupils across a wide range of ages, interests and abilities from Key Stage Three and Four up to A-Levels in its Sixth Form College. The school holds a specialist status in business and enterprise, and was rated as "Outstanding" for personal development of pupils during its most recent OFSTED school inspection report.

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To support St. Hilda's pupils and staff, the IT team is responsible for managing a network of computers and servers providing a mix of applications. In total the school has almost 500 personal computers on its network, comprised of a mixture of desktops and laptop machines. Lee Ellis, network manager at St. Hilda's, used a mixture of software tools to deploy, re-image and maintain machines.

However, as the importance of information and communication technology (ICT) within the school curriculum has grown, Ellis and his team faced a management headache. Because the number of desktop and laptop machines had grown, the challenge of keeping the applications and operating systems at the correct version was also becoming increasingly difficult. The utilities that had been used for these tasks did not perform acceptably on larger volumes of machines, leading to additional manual work for the IT team to ensure that systems were up to date. Ellis also wanted to improve on the school's current methods for managing software licenses and IT assets.

"Our previous tools were suitable for managing a small number of desktop upgrades or re-imaging, but they were not capable of consistently completing the same task across each full ICT suite, which would be around 32 machines per classroom," says Ellis. "When we tried to carry out a re-imaging project across a suite this size, or across our full number of desktops, it would lead to incomplete images being installed or systems not being fully patched. This resulted in additional manual work for the team, as each machine would have to be checked to ensure that it was up to date. This impacted on our ability to support other projects, and caused unnecessary delays in rolling out IT support."

Technology at Work

Solutions

Dell KACE™ K1000 Management Appliance

Dell KACE K2000 Deployment Appliance

Need For A Better Solution

A desktop refresh project carried out during the summer of 2007 drove home the need for a better solution. While 200 desktop machines were replaced, it took the IT team over three weeks to get all the machines to the right specifications and updates completed. "After it was finished, we knew that we had to look for an alternative approach to getting this work done," Ellis continues. "Our goal was to reduce the amount of time that we spent managing the re-imaging and patching processes, while making them as reliable and effective as possible."

Ellis looked at the systems management solutions on the market, and decided on trialing the Dell KACE Appliances to manage the school's network and PC estate. For the evaluation, Ellis and his team investigated all of the features within the appliances as part of an exhaustive testing regime. "Looking at the Dell KACE Appliances, we saw that they could provide all the functionality that we required in one place, which would greatly reduce the team's system management overhead. However, we had to be sure that the products would stand up to the workloads that our environment would throw at them and that we would see the return on investment that was promised," explains Ellis. "After our testing, we were extremely pleased with what we had seen, and we were confident that we would get the results that were expected."

Deployment Time Slashed From Three Weeks To Two Days

Following the evaluation, Ellis completed the installation just before the summer vacation. This was great timing as the team would be embarking on another desktop project that would put the two KACE Appliances to the test. "Similar to last year, we had 160 new machines that would have applications installed and the system images brought up to date. Using Dell KACE K2000 Deployment Appliance, we achieved this with an automated install and the whole project was completed in two days; unlike the previous year, there was no manual follow-up required. Compared to the three weeks it took last time, this validated the time and money savings that the appliances are delivering to the school—they are more than living up to our expectations," says Ellis. "We can now carry out work across our three ICT rooms simultaneously, with the machines in each room getting a different image automatically based on Microsoft® Active Directory®."

Delivering Additional Savings

The school has also benefited from the integrated help desk functionality of the Dell KACE K1000 Management Appliance. Prior to implementing the K1000 Appliance, Ellis had looked into buying a dedicated help desk system for the school's IT team to use for tracking support requests. However, following the deployment of the K1000 Appliance, Ellis has used the appliance's built-in help desk tools to fulfill this

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In the future, Ellis plans to use the power management feature within the appliance to manage the school's desktop estate. "With almost 500 machines to manage, the amount of power consumed if computers are left on overnight can be considerable. With the Dell KACE Appliance, we can automatically power down all the

machines at a certain time each night, and then bring them back online in the morning before school starts," said Mr. Ellis. "Once we have implemented this, we expect to see an annual saving of over £8,000 per year."

"As a publicly-funded organization and education provider, any investment we made in IT had to deliver real results back to us," concludes Ellis. "The Dell KACE Appliances have certainly achieved this goal, with both a more reliable level of service and speed of delivery across the larger ICT network that is now in place. We can guarantee that IT resources are delivered efficiently and on time, providing the school and its pupils with the IT support they need."



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