

»» Educating the Help Desk About a Powerful Solution



Middlesex Community College (MCC) is a dynamic, progressive learning community. But like many public entities, the school has had to find new ways to do more with less. This is exactly what the college has been able to do thanks to LANDesk® Management Suite

Increasing Efficiency

Middlesex Community College in Lowell, Massachusetts, offers students a wide range of learning options – from liberal arts and basic skills classes, to more than 50 career and technical training programs. The College network supports a niche set of academic services as well as administrative functions such as the Student Information System that handles student records and registration; billing; human resources and purchasing. Additionally, MCC's IT team handles Web development server access; file and print services; telnet, office applications; software development; and CAD/engineering applications.

For the last four years, Matt Scales, the manager of Internet technologies for the college, has relied on LANDesk Management Suite to evaluate, install and administer help desk technologies. "LANDesk Management Suite has increased our first-call resolution rate and decreased the time it takes us to deploy a classroom," says Scales. "Before we had LANDesk Management Suite, most helpdesk tickets were handled within a day or two. We now measure our success at the first point of contact, or within an hour. Additionally, we used to have one person answering the help desk phone and seven other people walking around campus all day fixing problems – when they could get to them. Using LANDesk Management Suite, we only need four people to answer the phone and we'll send out a technician on rare occasions. We were able to move our IT personnel to more proactive roles in our Technology Center. LANDesk Management Suite's remote control feature is the main reason we've been able to achieve these results."

A Uniform, Up-to-Date Client Base

Scales attributes his department's increased efficiency to LANDesk Management Suite's easy-to-use desktop installation and maintenance capabilities. "Before, when we had to upgrade a client application for our users, it was a large project

Business Needs

- Efficient software installation and remote desktop management.

Solution

- LANDesk® Management Suite 8

Business Benefits

- Reduced cost of help desk support.
- IT personnel are more proactive in solving MCC's technical problems.
- Improved software and operating system deployment mean increased IT staff efficiency.

where everyone on the help desk would have to come in on their off-hours and run around with disks," he recalls. "Instead of doing upgrades on nights and weekends, LANDesk Management Suite has allowed our tier-two help desk team to build a package, test it and deploy it during the day, supporting real time use of our facilities."

He also notes that due to the major effort involved in deploying software in the past, MCC's IT department never bothered to deploy service packs across the organization unless there was a specific problem. "We mostly installed patches when a user called the help desk," he says. "This led to having clients with vastly different patch levels. With LANDesk Management Suite, we can deploy service packs and major patches on an ongoing basis. This gives us a uniform and up-to-date client base. And the added benefit is that our help desk is always working with a known system."

Solving OS Deployment Dilemmas

MCC has a campus agreement with Microsoft to install the latest operating systems as they become available. Recently, LANDesk Management Suite helped Scales deploy the College's latest Windows XP upgrade. "Previously we used an OS deployment tool that took us weeks to clean up computers between semesters; we would only really 'fix up' the computers," he says. "We can now completely deploy a classroom with a 'fresh' image in a half an hour. This allows us to take more time creating a better image that will work well for our students. Additionally, our help desk can easily schedule a time with the user to backup their profile, send a new image, and then restore their profile within a few minutes – all from our call center. And for our classrooms, we just update our image and send it down when convenient."

In addition to efficient remote control and application deployment, Scales notes that MCC has realized some key non-technical benefits. "LANDesk Management Suite has helped us free up our personnel," notes Scales. "Instead of visiting desktops, they can work on longer term projects; document problems for our knowledge base; build and test all new software packages; build and test all OS images; and work more closely with our systems administrators to resolve large problems. By placing our second-tier people in a more proactive role, we've reduced calls to the help desk by avoiding problems before they surface. This makes for a happier user population."

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