NComputing

Better access to computers, without computers.

Primary school trades aging IT suite for in-classroom, virtual desktops.

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>
> **Paul Slater**
> Head Teacher

Desktop virtualisation software combined with *NComputing* **L300** devices allows students access to the internet and learning applications from their classrooms, eliminating the need for a dedicated IT suite.

Trumacar Nursery and Community Primary School, located in Higher Heysham, Lancashire, used to operate a dedicated IT suite for its assembly of more than 400 pupils aged between 4 and 11. However, scheduling computer lessons for the school's 15 classes became complicated and troublesome.

The suite's ageing computers were noisy and took up a lot of space. Keeping them running, as well as installing new updates and applications on each individual machine was laborious and inefficient.

Paul Slater, who took over as head teacher at Trumacar in January 2012, explained: "I wanted to modernise the IT systems to allow students to access the internet and learning applications from their classrooms with ease, ultimately providing an enjoyable, convenient learning experience and a valuable teaching tool that enhances pupils' education. The solution had to be energy and space efficient, not to mention cost effective."

Paul consulted Ed-IT Solutions, which was established in 2008 and is a specialist supplier of IT support services and solutions to the education sector. Paul had worked with ED-IT solutions at his previous school, Clifton Primary in Ansdell, also in Lancashire. Together, they had implemented a new IT system based on *NComputing*'s desktop virtualisation technology and Paul had a similar ideas for Trumacar.

ED-IT Solutions installed three high specification servers at Trumacar, which also run the school's administrative system. These were configured with *NComputing*'s **vSpace PRO** software and connected to 20 *NComputing* **L300** virtual desktop devices split between the school's 15 classrooms.

So how does it work?

NComputing's **vSpace** software runs centrally on the three servers. It allows multiple users to access a single operating system and a single set of applications by dividing the servers' resources into independent virtual workspaces that give each user their own rich IT experience.

At Trumacar, up to 52 students at any one time log on to the network via any of the *NComputing* **L300** terminals installed in the classrooms. **vSpace PRO** handles the desktop display and remote activities from the student's keyboard and mouse, allowing them unprecedented, hassle-free access to the internet and learning applications. These include Purple Mash, a creative space from educational software company 2simple packed with tools, games and curriculum resources.

"Trumacar also has a combination of approximately 20 iPads and laptops, upon which we installed *NComputing*'s client software," said Ed-IT Solution's Director Adam Greenhow. "This gives students using these mobile devices the ability to connect to the system and use the internet and learning applications in the same way."

This seamless integration of the school's existing technology with *NComputing*'s **vSpace PRO** makes for an IT system that is both reliable and convenient.

The benefits

Ed-IT Solutions' *NComputing* solution has an enormous range of benefits for Trumacar School, of which one of the most important is cost efficiency.

Paul commented: "Naturally we had budget constraints for this project and wanted to get the maximum amount of value for the lowest possible price. The *NComputing* desktop virtualisation system that Ed-IT Solutions installed is extremely cost efficient. We were able to spend less on more and avoid buying lots of expensive traditional PCs that we wouldn't fully utilise."

Adam explains: "By this Paul means that with a traditional PC, the average user only utilises a fraction of its processing power at any one time, making it highly inefficient. Using a centrally managed IT infrastructure, which allows multiple users to access a single operating system and a single set of applications on a server, means the client can maximise the processing power available. This means it is much better value for money."

In fact, because Trumacar school's new IT system is centrally managed, this makes it quick and simple for Ed-IT Solutions to maintain and apply group updates, so the total cost of ownership is very low. It also means that Ed-IT Solutions' contracted time at Trumacar, which is used to carry out IT maintenance and updates, is utilised efficiently.

The school's **L300**s use far less electricity than traditional PCs and generate less heat, making them much more energy efficient – exactly what the school was looking for. They are also tiny in size compared to traditional PCs and take up little valuable desk space.

Paul said: "We are very pleased with our new desktop virtualisation network; it seamlessly complements and integrates with our existing mobile devices and gives students access to applications that will benefit their education. Importantly, classes no longer need to book time in an IT suite, the new system is highly flexible and allows lots of pupils to log on at the same time from the convenience of their classrooms.

"Our school recently achieved an 'outstanding' rating from OFSTED and this was partly thanks to our IT upgrades. Ed-IT Solutions did a wonderful job, carrying out the installation quickly and efficiently whilst minimising disruption to our classes. Desktop virtualisation is so cost effective that it has become the natural economic choice for lots of applications that involve large numbers of users. I highly recommend it."

Trumacar School plans to further extend its IT system through ED-IT Solutions, creating a dedicated classroom for less able students with its own **L300** terminals. This will be fully integrated into the school's network.

Adam at ED-IT Solutions added: "We care deeply about the educational institutions we work with and only recommend products that are reliable, rigorously tested and proven in this environment. We have been partners with *NComputing* for more than ten years and regularly use its technology, it works brilliantly as a desktop alternative."