

Company Profile: The North Conejos School District serves 1,200 students in Conejos County in southern Colorado.

Website: <http://north.co.schoolwebpages.com/>

Business Challenge: As a rural school district in southern Colorado, North Conejos was having trouble monitoring and maintaining its distributed systems spread across five schools. The one-man IT department was forced to travel around the county, ensuring that the systems were updated with the latest software updates and were running optimally—a nearly impossible task given the distance and time constraints. As a result, teachers did not have reliable access to teaching curriculum, school schedules, multi-media software, interactive learning tools and the Internet—all valuable teaching tools for today’s technology-savvy students.

Solution: The North Conejos School District deployed an IT automation solution from Kaseya, giving the sole IT administrator the ability to remotely monitor, maintain, backup, secure and track all distributed systems from a single Web-based management console. As a result, all servers and workstations are managed remotely and proactively—a more efficient IT management strategy that heads off potential problems before they lead to downtime.



Kaseya Enables K-12 Education Classroom Technology for Colorado School District

As technology continues to become more pervasive in the classroom, the struggle to monitor and maintain distributed systems is a growing concern for many rural school districts around the country—including the North Conejos School District in southern Colorado. With five schools spread out over a large geographic area, an IT administrator is required to spend much of his time on the road or manually updating systems in an effort to ensure that computers are available and teachers and administrators have access to student records, inventory databases, schedules, multi-media software, the Internet and other interactive learning tools.

“Things were always falling through the cracks,” said Brad Huffaker, technology director for the district. “Making sure that 500 systems spread across the county have the latest patches, software version and security settings was virtually impossible. Our systems were often down or performing poorly, causing our teachers to lose confidence in the IT department, and I don’t blame them. Would you use a tool that worked only eight out of every ten times you used it?”

Not only is this reactive management strategy widely inefficient, it is a great inconvenience for teachers and students. Besides not having any confidence in the IT environment, teachers would have to put up with an administrator in the classroom while trying to teach. While students were expected to be listening to a lecture or working on an assignment, many were more interested in the man working on their classroom’s computer.

Knowing that remote management would be more efficient and less distracting, Huffaker deployed Symantec’s Altiris management software, but quickly found that it couldn’t give him the complete control over and access into the distributed systems that he needed. The solution was complicated, was a pain to deploy widely and added unnecessary steps to basic maintenance. In addition, the software wouldn’t integrate seamlessly with his anti-virus and backup software.

“The Altiris solved the remote manageability problems I was having but the complexity inherent in the solution didn’t make me any more efficient as an administrator,” Huffaker said. “I knew that there had to be a better, more intuitive solution out there that was better suited for my needs.”

Remote IT Automation Solution

Huffaker did some research and found a potential match, honing in on an IT automation solution from Kaseya. He downloaded a trial and was impressed with the ease of deployment and the logical interface, allowing him to achieve complete visibility into and control over every distributed system on the network. All he needed was an Internet connection, and he could monitor, maintain, back up and secure any server and workstation from a single Web-based management console. The only problem was that the solution was designed and marketed to managed service providers, not to the enterprise market.

Seeing that its product could help solve many of the management problems associated with distributed enterprise environments, Kaseya tailored its product for the North Conejos School District, arming Huffaker with the ability to implement a more proactive management strategy for his distributed systems while lessening the impact on end users.

“The Kaseya solution really is an amazing product,” Huffaker said. “I’m able to conduct Windows updates, monitor for viruses and other security threats, do backups and print out reports from a single management console—regardless of the physical location of the distributed systems or myself. It’s enabled me to proactively manage 500 systems on my own.”

Kaseya’s low-footprint agent is deployed on 10 servers and 490 workstations in five schools across Conejos County. The solution took less than 24 hours to install on all 500 systems, a tenth of the time it took to deploy Altiris. Through the Kaseya interface, Huffaker is able to remotely monitor performance and availability service levels while making sure the systems are patched correctly and are protected from data loss and security threats. Kaseya’s scripting engine helps automate basic tasks, eliminating much of the repetition associated with IT maintenance.

At the same time, the Kaseya solution automatically collects information on each system—including model number, operating system, memory, RAM, installed software, security status and peripherals—in a central repository, giving Huffaker a complete snapshot of the environment in real-time and assisting him in annual audits as well as equipment procurement and lifecycle planning.

Enabling Interactive Learning Tools

Immediately after deploying the Kaseya solution, availability of distributed systems increased from 85 percent to 99 percent, ensuring that administrators and teachers have access to the tools and information they need to provide quality education to the district’s 1,200 students. Given this jump in availability, the school district now provides two or three computers in each classroom—including several labs at each school—allowing teachers to leverage interactive teaching tools directly in the classroom.

“Things are less likely to go wrong with Kaseya manning the watch,” Huffaker said. “And if they do, I can remotely take control of the machine and fix the issue in real-time. Downtime is virtually non-existent, allowing teachers to do what they are meant to do—teach.”

According to Huffaker, the efficiencies in the Kaseya solution save him 15 to 20 hours per week, giving him the ability to manage all 500 distributed systems on his own and still have time to work on more proactive, innovative projects. It also means that the school district can save \$100,000 per year by not having to hire additional administrators. The completeness of the Kaseya solution also saves money by replacing anti-virus and backup software.

The ease-of-use of the backup module ensures that backups are done regularly and properly, making sure that all data is backed up and can be recovered

quickly and efficiently in a pinch. Recently, a teacher called Huffaker in a panic saying she had accidentally deleted six years of lesson plans from her workstation. It had taken her years to develop a core curriculum that had worked for her, and without the lesson plans, she would have to start from day one. While she was talking, Huffaker accessed her backup files and remotely restored the data by the end of the conversation. It was that simple.

“We couldn’t rely on technology as much as we do without the protection of Kaseya,” Huffaker said. “It essentially enables the way our administrators run the district and manage student information. It allows our teachers to take advantage of computers in the classroom. It allows students to access interactive learning tools and the Internet without interruption. Kaseya makes all this technology usable.”

Key Benefits

- The healthier systems have increased uptime from 85 percent to 99 percent available, giving teachers and students reliable access to educational software and other learning tools directly in the classroom
- A single IT administrator is able to efficiently manage 500 systems through one interface, negating the need to hire more staff or use multiple management tools and saving \$100,000 per year
- Backups are efficient and reliable while complete recoveries of workstations can be done quickly and remotely, in less than two hours

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— Brad Huffaker, technology director, North Conejos School District

About Kaseya

Kaseya is a global provider of IT automation software for IT solution providers and corporate IT organizations that benefit from deploying Kaseya’s systems management capabilities. Kaseya allows businesses to proactively manage distributed IT infrastructure easily and efficiently with one integrated Web-based platform. Kaseya’s technology has been deployed on over 1 million machines in more than 25 countries around the world.

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