

Customer Story

Education Industry

Watson Institute Embraces BYOD: Utilizes Ericom to Deliver Secure Access to Desktops via Smartphones and Tablets



“After replacing Citrix with Ericom’s PowerTerm WebConnect, we now have a more cost-effective solution to support our BYOD initiatives, giving staff an incredibly easy way to connect and access their Windows 7 desktops from all types of smartphones and tablets.”

Ryan Young
Information Services Manager
Watson Institute



Watson Institute, a century-old educational organization located near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA, serves hundreds of children and youth with special needs in grades K through 12, with subsidiary groups including an Education Center, Psychological Services, LEAP Pre-School, and Friendship Academy.

The majority of Watson’s staff requires access to their Windows 7 desktops when traveling within different school districts as well as after hours. In addition to, or instead of, carrying laptops, most prefer the option to use their iPads and Android devices, which Watson welcomes as part of the organization’s BYOD initiative.

CUSTOMER

Watson Institute

INDUSTRY

Education

PRODUCTS

- PowerTerm WebConnect
- AccessToGo

CHALLENGES

- Deploy a simple, affordable and reliable alternative to Citrix to support 175 users across three locations
- Provide staff with remote access to desktops across a wide variety of smartphones and tablets
- Make the company’s Bring-Your Own-Device (BYOD) initiative an effortless experience for staff

SOLUTIONS

- Select PowerTerm WebConnect 5.8 with Ericom AccessToGo for various Android and iOS devices

BENEFITS

- Less expensive to purchase and maintain compared to Citrix
- Provides a consistent desktop experience for mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets
- Simplifies BYOD rollouts by offering broad support for mobile devices, including native clients and HTML5 browser-based solutions
- Provides the same user-experience on all supported device types, thus reducing training and help desk costs
- Delivers reliable remote access sessions via Ericom’s Blaze RDP acceleration and compression technology

Watson previously used Citrix's remote access software, but eventually found the solution too costly and complex to manage. Ryan Young, Watson's Information Services Manager, explains, "We sought a simpler, easy-to-deploy solution that would allow our training staff and consultants to effortlessly connect to their Windows desktops, from Androids, iPhones and iPads."

Ultimately Watson chose Ericom PowerTerm WebConnect along with Ericom AccessToGo, which offers a native RDP client for both Android and iOS. Watson selected Ericom based on price, robust support, reliability, easy deployment and a better cross-platform, remote access user-experience for staff.

MAKING THE RIGHT CONNECTION

Ericom PowerTerm WebConnect, an advanced connection broker, provides Watson's users with unified access to desktops, applications, files and content across a wide range of mobile devices. In addition to Windows 7 desktops running on Microsoft Server 2008 R2, Watson also maintains several proprietary software applications and databases. Young and his team configured certain desktops with icons so users can easily gain access to these applications via Ericom and the devices of their choice.

To address potentially unreliable connections when working in remote

locations such as schools and coffee shops, Ericom's built-in Blaze acceleration and compression technology helps mitigate issues commonly related to RDP. This was especially useful during a trip, where a team from Watson traveled to Ireland to develop a consultation program on autistic support classrooms and programs. They had fast, unfettered access to their business-critical desktops and applications as if they were physically located inside one of Watson's facilities.

Ericom's PowerTerm WebConnect helps the IT department streamline and better manage corporate resources, improve access security, and extend existing technology infrastructure investments, all while significantly improving staff productivity.

ENABLING BYOD

Commenting on Watson's culture of embracing BYOD, Young says: "I do a lot of work at home. I don't have to drag around a laptop anymore. I just take my iPad or Android phone and easily connect and do what I need to do, remotely."

Ericom AccessToGo, serving as PowerTerm WebConnect's mobile access client, provides a consistent desktop experience on smartphones and tablets. Its function and ease of use allow even non-technically savvy staff to quickly gain access to their computing environment, eliminating the need for training and over-

burdening the IT department's help desk.

PARTNERING WITH ERICOM

Since implementation four years ago, PowerTerm WebConnect provides a cost-effective, flexible connection broker and management solution, efficiently meeting Watson's organizational IT needs.

"Ericom PowerTerm WebConnect turned out to be a great fit, based on its affordability and reliability," added Young. "Additionally, the company's support staff is very quick to respond to any technical issues and requests. It is comforting to know they are available when I need them."

A LOOK AHEAD THROUGH THE BROWSER

To further simplify access to desktops and applications using standard HTML5 browsers, Watson plans to deploy Ericom's groundbreaking AccessNow solution in the near-term.

Complementing AccessToGo which provides native mobile client support, AccessNow is an HTML5 browser-based RDP solution that requires zero endpoint installation and works on all devices – PCs, Mac, smart phones, Chromebooks – even locked down workstations. "As our users add new types of devices, AccessNow gives us the flexibility to expand the scope of our BYOD program, offering the option to access desktops and applications from a HTML5 browser," Young added.



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