Education

Customer Story
Education Industry

Ericom Extends Reach of Bradford Central School District Chromebooks to Windows Applications

BACKGROUND

Located in New York State, Bradford Central School District serves approximately 300 students in K-12. Bradford wanted to implement a BYOD initiative that allows students to tap into the district's existing IT infrastructure from school-owned Google Chromebooks as well as from personal laptops, tablets and smartphones. Their 1:1 program provides students with cost-effective and easy access to Windows-based applications and desktops from home and school.

"Google Chromebooks provide an ideal learning environment for our students, but there were a handful of applications that could not run on them. Ericom's AccessNow solved this by enabling cross-platform access to hosted Windows applications not only from Chromebooks, but also from standard HTML5 browsers that are readily available on just about every desktop, tablet or smartphone."

Jeff Tham
Technology Coordinator
Bradford School District

CUSTOMER
Bradford Central School District

INDUSTRY
Education

PRODUCTS
Ericom AccessNow

CHALLENGES
- Allow approximately 300 students to remotely access hosted Windows applications via school-owned Google Chromebooks and personal tablets and smartphones
- Deploy a simple, affordable, clientless alternative to Citrix that works cross-platform
- Provide a flexible RDP solution that can adapt to future needs, devices and users
- Enable a district-wide Bring-Your-Own-Device (BYOD) initiative

SOLUTIONS
- Implement Ericom AccessNow across Chromebooks and various Android and iOS devices

BENEFITS
- Delivers a consistent desktop experience for all supported device types, such as smartphones and tablets
- Provides a clientless solution that requires no installation of software on the end-user device, significantly reducing IT support costs
- Less expensive to purchase and maintain compared to Citrix
- Extends the utility of existing IT resources, making them available via a broad range of platforms and devices

To enable Bradford's future BYOD plans, Bradford needed an easy to use system that mixed mobile and other personal computing devices. It also wanted to eliminate endpoint installation, the latter of which would require Bradford's IT department to spend valuable resources on training, support and maintenance. Among the options available, Bradford considered Citrix, but found their solution too costly and time-intensive to install. "We really wanted a clientless solution that wouldn't require a huge manual for kids to connect in," explains Jeff Tham, Bradford's Technology Coordinator.

Computing in the classroom and "BeYOnD"
After evaluating several solutions, Bradford selected AccessNow, the market's first high performance HTML5 RDP client that provides browser-based access to Windows applications, desktops, files and content on almost any device.

"AccessNow was much more cost-effective," explained Tham. "In addition to price, AccessNow was easy to deploy, requiring only a day or two to get up and running. It provides a flexible, clientless solution that gives our students access to all the computing resources they need, via Chromebooks and other devices."

With AccessNow, Bradford now has the capability to deliver a consistent learning environment, in and outside of the classroom. Running entirely within an HTML5 compatible browser such as Chrome, Firefox, Safari and Internet Explorer, AccessNow enables students to log in via Chromebooks, iPads, iPhones, Android devices, as well as Macs, Linux and Windows laptops and desktops. There is no installation of software on the end-user device, which significantly reduces Bradford's IT support costs.

Extending the Utility of Chromebooks
Bradford purchased 125 Chromebooks in 2011 for students to use in the classroom, which are among their computing resources powered by Microsoft Windows Server 2012. Although students use Chromebooks for a broad range of Web-based content and curriculum, Bradford needed the capability to give them access to Windows legacy applications, such as Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Photoshop and Typing Master, a Windows-based typing program.

"We have been using Chromebooks for about two years; which are great for accessing standardized Web applications and other Google programs," said Tham. "AccessNow allowed us to extend the utility of our Chromebooks investment by providing access to several pertinent Windows applications, including Typing Master."

Future Growth
In addition to providing access to hosted applications that would otherwise be cumbersome and expensive for IT to install and maintain Bradford found a flexible solution through Ericom that accommodated their needs today and in the years ahead, especially as new devices become available.

"AccessNow definitely met all our requirements because of its ability to do cross-platform," added Tham. "While we're primarily using Chromebooks today, our BYOD initiative will certainly expand to leverage other devices such as tablets and smartphones."

Since the deployment of AccessNow in November 2012, Bradford students joined a growing list of schools, districts and universities that have implemented successful, Ericom-powered BYOD and 1:1 computing initiaitves. Additionally, as Chromebooks play an increasing role in K-12 deployments, AccessNow will help optimize existing IT infrastructure and offer a migration path to the device-agnostic educational learning environments of the future.

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