Customer Story
Education Industry

Jackson School District Reduces Costs by 40 Percent After Replacing Citrix with Ericom's Remote Access Solution

Located in Central New Jersey, approximately 60 miles from New York City and Philadelphia, Jackson School District serves 10,000 students across 10 schools. The K-12 school district is comprised of six elementary, two middle and two high schools, supported by 1,000 teachers.

Operating within a growing community, Jackson School District previously utilized Citrix to enable teachers, staff and students to remotely access Windows applications and desktops, but the solution proved to be too complex and costly to support and maintain, especially with shrinking budgets and a small IT department. The school district needed a better way to securely access files and applications from home as well as inside the school without downloading client software.

Working with reseller Boxed Network Environment, Jackson School District replaced Citrix with a SaaS-based remote access solution that was browser-based and can be used across an array of devices, including Google Chromebooks. This would not only allow the district to save money and do more with less, but also provide a scalable foundation capable of supporting initiatives such as BYOD.

> " *Replacing Citrix with PowerTerm WebConnect not only saved us money but also offers a flexible platform for teachers, students, administration and parents to connect with the school on so many different levels. Ericom, through the help of Boxed Network Environment, is removing the boundaries of the school's learning environment, especially as we begin implementing our BYOD initiatives.* "

Lincoln Mahabir
Supervisor of Technology
Jackson School District

CUSTOMER
Jackson School District

INDUSTRY
Education

PRODUCT
Ericom PowerTerm WebConnect
Ericom AccessNow

CHALLENGES
- Deploy a simple, affordable, and clientless alternative to Citrix without investing in on-premise IT infrastructure
- Provide 1,000 teachers with remote access to Windows applications, files and desktops across various devices
- Support the launch of a BYOD initiative that gives students access to various applications and resources via their own devices

SOLUTION
Work with reseller Boxed Network Environment and Always ON Cloud Technology Inc. to implement a SaaS-based remote access solution that leverages PowerTerm WebConnect and AccessNow

BENEFITS
- The combination of replacing Citrix with a SaaS-based remote access solution eliminated the need to purchase and maintain on-premise IT infrastructure and manage endpoint installs — saving 40 percent
- Browser-based access via HTML5 doubled the lifespan of existing IT resources, including 3,000 desktops
- Migrating to a hosted environment enabled IT staff to focus on more important projects
- Provides teachers with "anytime, anywhere" access to their Windows desktops and applications such as curriculum-driven software and lesson planning programs

Building Blocks to BYOD

In 2011, Boxed Network Environment deployed a hosted remote access environment powered by Ericom PowerTerm WebConnect, an RDP connection broker that provides secure and centrally managed access to Windows desktops and applications. Maintaining client software at the endpoints had proved to be too cumbersome and difficult for users and required support from Jackson School District's IT staff. Ericom's browser-based solution was easy to use and accessible via a broad range of devices, including the district's Windows XP, Windows 7 and Mac computers as well as 700 recently purchased Chromebooks.

"We switched from Citrix to Ericom because in addition to lower costs, we felt PowerTerm WebConnect was a lot easier to use, more flexible and faster because it takes advantage of HTML5," explains Lincoln Mahabir, Supervisor of Technology for Jackson School District. "Using a standard browser versus downloading a client improved the user experience and significantly reduced support, making our teachers and students more productive."

Taking advantage of browser-based remote access, teachers now have the flexibility to perform curriculum-related tasks such as lesson planning and test generation from home or outside of school. Additionally, students will increasingly be allowed to use their personal devices such as smartphones and tablets to access certain applications and learning environments. As part of a new program, Jackson School District is integrating Chromebooks inside the classroom, offering similar browser-based access to cloud-hosted Windows resources as well as Web applications via Ericom PowerTerm WebConnect.

With Ericom AccessNow, teachers and students enjoy full access to managed desktops, files and applications via popular HTML5 supported browsers, such as Chrome, Safari and Firefox, with no client software or setup required. AccessNow also supports a broad range of devices, making it even easier for Jackson School District to deliver its learning environment to users, anywhere.

Do More With Less

Specialists "Always On Cloud Technology," Boxed Network Environment worked with Jackson School District to replace Citrix with a hosted implementation of PowerTerm WebConnect. This not only improved accessibility and lowered IT overhead, but also saved the school district from the cost of purchasing and maintaining on-premise infrastructure such as servers, virtualization software and other networking equipment.

"After replacing Citrix with Ericom, we saved 40 percent and now can expand the use of our hosted remote access environment to accommodate the evolving needs of the school district," added Mahabir.

After nearly two years of using PowerTerm WebConnect, Jackson School District has been able to redirect the cost savings to support other K-12, BYOD and business-critical projects. By utilizing a hosted environment, as 3,000 desktop computers can be repurposed, extending their average life from three years or less to up to as much as seven years.

"Schools entering the BYOD-cloud era, need to be creative in addressing IT infrastructure from a cost, technical support and usability perspective," explained Vinny Zafonte of Boxed Network Environment. "Through our SaaS-based deployment of Ericom, Jackson School District can leverage its browser-based platform to support a wide range of academic and administrative functions and get better utility out of existing IT resources."

Eliminate Endpoint Support

Today's schools typically have stretched IT departments often bogged down by excessive desktop or endpoint support issues. According to Zafonte, Jackson School District eliminated the time required for software upgrades and printer drivers. This frees up Mahabir and his IT staff to focus on higher priority projects.

"Printing is no longer a problem," Zafonte added. "With printing capabilities built-in to the browser, teachers and students can print at home or in school, significantly reducing support calls."

Next Steps

Jackson School District continues to evolve as the community it supports grows. The school district plans to expand their 100-user concurrent license of PowerTerm WebConnect to 250 users, while encouraging the use of Chromebooks in the classroom and all types of devices from home and other remote locations.

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