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Intelligent Utilities for ABSOLUTE Control

Faronics Deep Freeze and Roger Williams University

CASE STUDY

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History

Roger Williams, founder of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, was the first major figure in colonial America to argue forcefully for the need for democracy, religious freedom, and the understanding of America's native cultures. Roger Williams University has dedicated itself

to the principles advocated by its namesake: education, freedom, and tolerance. Through his scholarship in language, theology, and law, Williams' life reflected the value of learning and teaching. The University honors the legacy of Roger Williams by modeling a community in which diverse people and diverse ideas are valued, in which intellectual achievement is celebrated, and in which civic responsibility is expected.



Situation

Roger Williams University has an enrollment of approximately 5000 students, and over 200 faculty. There are six servers for over 375 PC and Mac workstations. The servers are running Windows Server 2003, the PCs are running Windows XP SP2, and the Macs are running OS 10.3.

Problem

The IT staff at Roger Williams was dealing with a number of problems in the computer labs — desktop shortcuts being deleted, backgrounds and configurations being changed, programs essential for classes being uninstalled, games being downloaded, as well as the intrusion of a large variety of malware, including viruses, Trojans, and adware.

Shawn Platt, the Academic Technology Services Manager at Roger Williams, and his IT staff used various vendor products to deal with these problems over the years. Initially, they used a product that worked well enough during the Windows 98 era, but became a problem with the release of Windows XP. For this operating system, they used a combination of software and hardware products, which worked but involved opening a PC to install a component, and then installing software on top of that. "It wasn't what I would call "a fun time" back then," said Mr. Platt. He recalled a time a few years ago when they lost an entire teaching classroom because of a product they were using.

The IT staff dealt with downtime on individual PCs that lasted anywhere from a day to a week, depending on the circumstances. Often they were dealing with multiple PCs experiencing downtime. The staff tried other variations of software and hardware security products to keep their PCs and Macs in working condition but they found the solutions were often too cumbersome to configure and install. They were constantly managing varying PC behavior on a daily basis. Mr. Platt said the first question of the day every morning was, "What's not working right today?"

Solution

Mr. Platt had heard about Deep Freeze from a colleague, and then received an evaluation copy of the program one summer about four years ago. "I was amazed at its functionality. I didn't spend a lot of time with it because it impressed me enough that we needed to go with something for the coming school year that was fast approaching. To this day, I think I made a very wise choice," said Mr. Platt.

The IT staff deployed it on only a few machines at the beginning of the evaluation process in the summer, then Mr. Platt took it to 100% usage for the PCs and Macs.

Evaluation

“The difference is night and day,” said Mr. Platt. “Downtime has decreased to almost nil and is now mostly hardware related.” Mr. Platt and his staff now live by the motto: “If all else fails, reboot!”

Today, the IT staff at Roger Williams University has a single full-time staff member who takes care of most of the Academic Lab PCs and Macs — almost 400 machines. Mr. Platt says this is possible because they have so little downtime now, thanks to Deep Freeze.

“I think you folks make a great product and it’s certainly done what it’s promoted to do,” said Mr. Platt. “To have the flexibility for the students and faculty to use the PC and Mac to it’s full potential and put it back when done has been great. Your technical support has also been great with my staff — and if you don’t have the technical support, you don’t have a product.”

