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Intelligent Utilities for ABSOLUTE Control

## **Faronics Deep Freeze and Safford Unified School District**

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### **CASE STUDY**

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## Situation

Safford Unified School District No. 1 (SUSD) is a fiscally independent, tax supported public school system for grades preschool through 12. Located 120 miles northeast of Tucson and 150 miles east of Phoenix, SUSD rests at the base of Mt. Graham in Arizona.

SUSD is a K-12 public school district that services approximately 300 employees and 3,000 students. They have a network consisting of approximately 1,000 computers and five servers. SUSD is running Windows XP on their workstations and Windows Server 2003 on their servers.



## Problem

The IT staff at SUSD experienced a wide variety of problems, mainly on the student computers. These problems consisted of students deleting files, changing settings, removing programs, and much more.

The district has 18 student computer labs and all of them had several computers down at any given time — and these computers generally stayed down for several days at a time. Students eventually realized if they deleted system files, there wouldn't always be enough computers for them to do their work. Students also deleted toolbars so programs looked different on each computer, which made instructing difficult because teachers could not predict what students would actually see on their screens when they opened programs.

The IT staff at SUSD consists of the following employees: Technology Coordinator, Technology Educator, Network Administrator, Software Technician, Computer Technician, and a Technology Specialist. Two of these employees were responsible for most of the hardware / software problems in the labs; however, many times the problems were so time consuming that other employees had to be involved. Since only two people were supporting 1,000 workstations, it was virtually impossible to have computers fixed and turned around in a day or two.

The SUSD IT staff used various methods to deal with the issues. Generally they reimaged the computers using Symantec Ghost. Having to reimage computers so often was very frustrating. “We would get frustrated with teachers for not watching what their students were doing on the computers. We would get frustrated with fixing a computer and then being called back out to do it again,” said Susan Lindsey, the Technology Coordinator of SUSD. “We spent time trying to troubleshoot to avoid Ghosting the computer. We had numerous help desk calls when toolbars were missing or programs didn't look the way teachers expected them to look.”

## Solution

In their search for a solution to the lab problems, the staff discovered Deep Freeze. They evaluated the program on a few computers and tested it by trying to make changes that would have destroyed the operating system without Deep Freeze. They tried several applications that locked down the computer and did their best to get around and break Deep Freeze, but had no luck.

“We found that Deep Freeze was the most secure of the programs we tried, and had the features that we were looking for,” said Ms. Lindsey. “Deep Freeze has the capability of locking down the computer without losing any functionality — we wanted students to be able to use the computer freely and Deep Freeze allowed us to do that.”

## Evaluation

Now, with Deep Freeze protecting their computer labs, SUSU can handle all their problems with just two employees. Deep Freeze allows the staff to keep the software configurations current so that now, when there is a hardware problem, they are able to attend to it in just a few days. Prior to deploying Deep Freeze the staff was so busy with reloading software it took them weeks to get to hardware issues.

The IT staff said the biggest difference of having Deep Freeze deployed is the amount of time it has saved them. They no longer have to spend the majority of their time in the labs working on issues. Also, teachers and students are happy because they both see what they expect to see when they turn on a computer in the lab. The staff no longer has to deal with items that have been downloaded, desktops that have been changed, or programs that have been deleted. Deep Freeze has also served as a great virus protection program because if a virus is downloaded, the student simply restarts the computer and things are great again.

“This truly is the best product we have ever purchased,” said Ms. Lindsey. “It has allowed us to support 1,000 workstations with one hardware technician and not be worried about small but time consuming issues. It has reduced our help desk calls, it has increased our turnaround time on other issues, and it has helped both our teachers and students learn how to use their network drives and not rely on “unreliable” computer hard drives. It is a well-designed program that makes Freezing and Thawing a breeze. I don’t know how we would operate without it. It has completely changed our world. It is probably the single most important piece of software we purchased.”