



Faronics™

Intelligent Utilities for ABSOLUTE Control

Faronics Deep Freeze and Uconnect

CASE STUDY

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History

Uconnect is a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) based in Uganda. Uconnect began as a computer literacy project, but the advent of the Internet turned it into a connectivity project for schools. Uconnect imports used computers from Europe and USA, revamps and refurbishes them, and supplies them to schools and organizations. The NGO also helps schools network their computer labs and connect to the Internet.

In the first year of the project, the organization distributed hundreds of computers to 60 schools in mostly rural areas. To date Uconnect has supplied over 160 primary, secondary, and vocational training institutions, with computers. Over 1,000 workstations have been donated to schools in the Uganda area since the start of the project.

Situation

The Uconnect project is held in high regard in Uganda. Recently President Museveni said, “Career development is most important for the students, and I am pleased that the Uconnect Schools Project is equipping our students with the computer skills so necessary for our nation’s development.”

The Schools Project continues to gain exposure, and overtures have been made for the team to promote its activities. Uconnect was invited to give a presentation about the project to 190 secondary school head teachers in Gulu, in war-torn Northern Uganda. Recently Daniel Stern, one of the founding members of Uconnect, was in Geneva where the team participated in the Sustainable Development Festival. Uconnect was featured in a live seven-minute television interview, and had over 500 visitors to the booth where they displayed a large map of Uganda showing the locations of the 140 beneficiary schools. At the conference a Geneva official offered to donate 100 computers to the project.

The Uconnect Schools Project has gained a reputation for providing high quality products and services. They provide a one-year limited warranty on refurbished computers, and seldom have problems with computers being returned for repair. Mr. Stern is convinced that the protection the computers get from Faronics Deep Freeze has greatly contributed to the success of the project.

Problem

When Uconnect visited school computer labs where refurbished computers were being used by students, they found many of them to be misconfigured and not running efficiently.

The teachers responsible for the labs were often unable to troubleshoot problems, and sometimes did not know problems even existed. The schools’ technical support departments were typically understaffed and therefore unable to address all the computer issues that were occurring. Equipment was returned to Uconnect for repair because of software problems, most often caused by students experimenting with the file system and playing with different programs.

Another problem existed with the quality control of the computers. The Uconnect team had not yet begun to ensure that each workstation was conforming to a particular specification. As a result, there were many variations among the quality of workstations delivered to schools.



*Members of the Uconnect support team.
From left: Godfrey, Francis, Ronald.*

Solution

Uconnect was introduced to Faronics Deep Freeze by the CEO of Advanced Interactive, Mr Karim Lakhani. Advanced Interactive is a leading developer and provider of hardware- and software-based technology that enables users to access the Internet in a cost-effective way. Their users include schools, colleges, remote communities, health centers, and hospitals.

Uconnect found Deep Freeze to be a revelation. They tried the evaluation version of the software and knew it was “THE Solution.” With the benefit of hindsight, Uconnect believes many of the problems and issues to do with technical support have been solved through using Deep Freeze.

The software’s restart-and-restore process is simple for students and teachers alike to perform, resulting in less downtime and less need for computers to be rebuilt. And because of Deep Freeze and the resulting uniformity of the workstations, over a period of time, the support team acquired a growing conviction that “nothing short of right is right.”

Evaluation

For Uconnect, Deep Freeze has had a significant positive impact on the quality of service they provide to schools. Deep Freeze has also given the team a boost in confidence to continue to expand the project without fear of having to face unmanageable after-sales service problems.

Before Deep Freeze was used on the computers the Uconnect support team was beginning to spend an increasing amount of their time fixing returned ‘broken’ workstations. Getting those workstations back into working order took an inordinate amount of time and was a major distraction from the primary goal and major effort of preparing newly refurbished workstations for the schools. It was not long after Deep Freeze was installed on the computers that Uconnect began to notice far fewer workstations were being returned for repair. As a result, the team was able to concentrate on improving its quality control procedures. Knowing that the workstations would be Frozen once they had ‘got it right,’ was an important incentive for the support team.

Says Mr Stern, “I am regularly encouraged when I meet with a head teacher of a recipient school who has come to ministry headquarters on official business and am told that all workstations are working perfectly.”