



Faronics™

Intelligent Utilities for ABSOLUTE Control

Faronics Deep Freeze and Upper Dauphin Area School District

CASE STUDY

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Faronics

Toll Free Tel: 800-943-6422

Toll Free Fax: 800-943-6488

International Tel: +1 604-637-3333

International Fax: +1 604-637-8188

www.faronics.com

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Situation



Upper Dauphin Area School District is a K-12 school district located in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania. The district is comprised of an elementary and middle school located in Lykens, and a high school located in Elizabethville. District wide there are 500 student and teacher workstations that run Windows XP, and a total of 19 servers. Upper Dauphin Area School District currently has two IT personnel managing their computing environment: the Director of Technology who doubles as the network administrator, and a full-time PC technician.

Problem

Upper Dauphin Area School District faced day-to-day IT problems typical of any multi-user computing environment. Workstations were susceptible to accidental or malicious software changes, which meant that users could not be guaranteed a clean and secure network environment. Malicious software changes were especially a problem in the high school computing labs, where the advanced computing abilities of some users allowed them to create larger workstation disruptions. Constantly trying to bring control to an uncontrolled environment was straining the school district's IT resources.

For Bryan Campbell, the Director of Technology, the primary issue was the IT time involved in restoring damaged workstations to a functional state. In an effort to reduce system downtime, he tried a software product that allowed him to place restrictions on what the users could do and access. While this method was able to prevent several forms of system damage by restricting the user's workstation capabilities, it was still not the solution he was looking for. According to Mr. Campbell, protecting workstations via a restrictive method is not easy to implement, as it requires a significant amount of time to configure all the policies and settings. Also, the restrictions needed constant updating as students discovered new 'backdoors' that were left unsecured. Finally, creating a restrictive IT environment was not the direction that Upper Dauphin Area School District wanted to take their computers in.

Solution

Bryan Campbell first came across Faronics Deep Freeze when he attended NECC Chicago 2000. Upper Dauphin Area School District was one of four school districts nationwide that were invited to showcase their SIF leadership at NECC, one of North America's premiere education technology events. After visiting the Faronics booth and learning about Deep Freeze, Bryan was immediately interested. He knew that his current 'lock down' solution was not working for him, the teachers, or the students. Deep Freeze, however, was the solution he had been looking for. The non-restrictive approach was what the teachers and students wanted, and the 'reboot-to-restore' approach was exactly what he needed. After trying an evaluation copy of Deep Freeze, he was sold. The feature set, ease of use, and value of Deep Freeze triumphed over any other products evaluated. For Bryan Campbell and the Upper Dauphin Area School District, Faronics Deep Freeze was the way to go.

Evaluation

Since implementing Deep Freeze across all student workstations, Upper Dauphin Area School District has enjoyed a significant increase in their workstation uptime, and a massive reduction in their IT support requests. In fact, the only time a workstation goes down now is because a hardware failure. “The non-restrictive nature of Deep Freeze is great,” says Bryan Campbell. “We don’t have to worry about system settings being changed, and the amount of tech time we have saved has definitely made Deep Freeze worth the investment.” The centralized management features of Deep Freeze Enterprise gave the school district the enhanced flexibility options required for managing large computing environments with ease. Using the Deep Freeze Enterprise Console, the IT personnel are able to update and maintain Deep Freeze workstations from a single remote location.

Upper Dauphin Area School District also uses Novell ZENWorks as part of their enterprise management strategy. Having Deep Freeze integrated with Novell ZENWorks saves administrators time and effort when managing their enterprise deployment of Deep Freeze, since maintenance packages and configuration updates can be implemented with ease through the robustness of the ZENWorks system management suite. For Mr. Campbell, the ability to push out deployments to his workstations, combined with the rock solid reliability of Deep Freeze, has been invaluable. It’s the only way that two IT personnel can manage so many computers.

In addition to Deep Freeze, Upper Dauphin Area School District is also rolling out Faronics Anti-Executable on their systems. Faronics Anti-Executable protects workstations from unwanted software by preventing unauthorized executables from running. Anti-Executable ensures workstation integrity by scanning the entire workstation hard drive and creating a whitelist of all programs that are authorized for use, thereby preventing applications that are not on the list from executing or installing. Upper Dauphin Area School District is adding Anti-Executable to their current Deep Freeze and Group Policy deployment to create a rock-solid workstation environment. “Using Deep Freeze and Anti-Executable together keeps my desktops in pristine condition,” says Mr. Campbell. “We currently only have two IT personnel supporting the district’s computing infrastructure; an impossible task without the help of Deep Freeze. I won’t even begin to estimate what Deep Freeze has saved us in both support time and dollars.”