

»» Keeping Uptime Up — and Downtime Down



A dependable IT network expedites the flow of information, and network maintenance can often be a bottleneck. At Frostburg State University in western Maryland, LANDesk® Management Suite helps to keep vital data on the move.

Frostburg State University is a comprehensive regional university offering an array of undergraduate and graduate degrees. From arts and humanities, through applied technologies, business, education, and environmental studies, the University's mission is all about education — and education is all about information, efficiently conveyed from point to point.

Equipped For Education

E. Wade Bluebaugh is Frostburg State University's IT Telecommunications Specialist. He first learned of LANDesk Management Suite four years ago when downtime issues consumed an inordinate amount of his workday.

"Many problems would take from 15 minutes to a few hours to resolve," Bluebaugh recalls. "We would have to physically visit a user's computer almost every time. Occasionally we could talk a user through each step by telephone, but it's much easier to do the work for the user by way of remote control. We didn't spend a lot of time on maintenance since that meant we'd have to visit each PC. Usually we would perform maintenance only when a computer would go down, requiring a rebuild."

Three years ago, Frostburg State deployed LANDesk Management Suite, and appointed Bluebaugh as the LANDesk Management Suite Administrator for the entire campus. Immediately, work was streamlined and tasks that formerly took hours or days could be completed in short order.

"LANDesk Management Suite helps us reduce the time it takes to resolve support issues through remote control and software distribution," declares Bluebaugh.

"Our network supports everything from student billing, admissions, and financial aid to online courses and customer support, so network downtime greatly affects every area of the University. If the network is down, business stops."

Business Needs

- Effective and efficient system-wide administrative control for a campus-wide network serving students, faculty, and staff

Solution

- LANDesk® Management Suite

Business Benefits

- Network downtime from virus-related malfunctions is sharply reduced thanks to LANDesk Management Suite's central administration of third-party antivirus software.
- System-wide maintenance from the LANDesk console prevents unexpected failures.
- Software updates and upgrades may be centrally deployed whenever required.



Knowledge Shared, Knowledge Deployed

NetworkD, a LANDesk Expert Solution Provider based in Newport Beach, California, played a vital role in the speedy deployment of LANDesk Management Suite at Frostburg State University. “NetworkD has been a great help in getting us up and running in a short amount of time,” notes Bluebaugh. “NetworkD worked with me for about one month to deploy LANDesk Management Suite. They handled the setup of LANDesk Management Suite on the server, and on our workstations consisting of PCs that were not part of our domain, as well as PCs that were part of two different domains. By the time they left campus, we had almost a 100% install base on our PCs and Macs.”

And says Bluebaugh, NetworkD’s team helped Frostburg State better support its users with remote control and software distribution. “By working side by side with the NetworkD consultant, I received a great deal of knowledge transfer,” comments Bluebaugh. “I knew more about Management Suite after the install than I would have known reading the manual. NetworkD also have a tight relationship with LANDesk Software, so they can take care of me when I have issues or requests.”



New Approaches, New Efficiencies

Bluebaugh and members of his team no longer have to visit each computer individually to install software upgrades, perform routine system maintenance, or troubleshoot unexpected problems. Now, LANDesk® Management Suite extends their reach campus wide, to every hard drive and desktop, all from the comfort of the LANDesk Management Suite console.

One specific area of concern for Bluebaugh is protecting the network from viruses and other attacks. With so many users, so many machines, and so many opportunities for infiltration, centralized administration of antivirus tools is a real day-to-day benefit.

“Moving from computer to computer running virus scans could set us back by as much as a week,” Bluebaugh observes. “It was difficult to recover from an outbreak. But now the software distribution feature of LANDesk Management Suite allows us to take a proactive approach to solving virus issues. We can distribute Microsoft vulnerability patches to the PCs when they become available as well as distribute the virus definitions to each desktop. The ability to scan for viruses and use software distribution to help fix computers really helps in reducing the number of viruses that could bring down our systems. We don’t have to make as many trips from building to building trying to fix problems.”

Other important software functions are kept up to date from the LANDesk Management Suite console, with easy management of necessary upgrades. “Formerly we would set up network shares to install applications,” Bluebaugh relates. “Then we would go to the desktops and run the setup from each individual computer. Now we can push software out to a computer if a user requests it, or to all computers on the network for required upgrades. I’ve used LANDesk Management Suite to image some of the computers and deploy a new operating system using the OS Deployment Module. I’m also pleased that we’ve been able to leverage our current investment in Symantec’s Ghost product with the Management Suite’s built-in support for Ghost and PowerQuest products. I’m very happy that LANDesk Management Suite offers this level of support.”

Recently, Frostburg State began upgrading to PeopleSoft, and LANDesk Management Suite smoothed and facilitated what could have been a rocky transition. “LANDesk Management Suite is most definitely a valuable tool for PeopleSoft application support,” adds Beth Meeks, the University’s Director of Administrative Computing. “We had remote control software that we had used with our legacy system, so we knew that it would be imperative to have a replacement when we implemented PeopleSoft. LANDesk Management Suite allowed us to connect to an end user and see the error they were experiencing, or to explain something they didn’t understand. They say ‘a picture’s worth a thousand words,’ and that definitely rings true in the technical world. Having LANDesk Management Suite greatly reduces the time it would otherwise take to diagnose and understand a technical problem.”

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