

Low-cost computing for education.

Old PCs weigh down Brick Township; NComputing saves the day

Challenge

Meet growing demand for district-wide computer access while cutting costs and reducing IT maintenance and support.

Solution

Deploy NComputing across multiple campuses in varied educational environments.

Impact

Huge savings in hardware costs; significantly reduced deployment and support costs.

School district budgets are being stretched to the limit, and that's not likely to change. Finding money for books, maintenance, and other essentials is a common challenge for just about every district. At the same time, as online research and e-learning programs become integral to school curriculum, demand for access to computers is growing quickly. Brick Township Public Schools in New Jersey is no different. But with more than 10,000 students and 14 schools and learning labs, the budget doesn't allow the option of replacing all of the district's 4,600 drastically outdated PCs.



Pupils share the power of a single PC with NComputing.

An unsolvable problem

"We had a huge hole, in terms of providing up-to-date computer access, that we could never fill due to budget constraints," said Leonard Niebo, Brick Township's director of IT. Outfitting classrooms, libraries, and learning centers with computers is essential to meeting the district's instructional goals. However, the district's ten-year-old computers were so outdated that they could no longer be upgraded.

"We were in a constant state of computer triage, trying to keep our old PCs running," said Niebo. Brick Township considered using their old PCs as thin clients, but the power supplies were burning out constantly and were so inefficient that each machine was draining electricity at the rate of \$100 per year. "We also looked at new thin-client options, but licensing fees alone totaled more than \$200 per seat. Finding an affordable solution didn't seem possible."

"I had seen the NComputing solution at an educational technology conference, and frankly, I figured there had to be some kind of catch," said Niebo. "Then I saw an ad for NComputing in *eSchool News* for a free demo kit, and decided to try it out."

“NComputing saved the day.”

LEONARD NIEBO
DIRECTOR OF IT
BRICK TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NComputing gets an A+

“We tested NComputing on one of the new PCs we had purchased as a band-aid fix for the elementary school classrooms the year before. We popped the PCI card into the computer, logged on to the network, and were immediately sold,” said Niebo.

The NComputing solution works because today’s PCs are so powerful that the vast majority of applications only use a small fraction of the computer’s capacity. NComputing’s hardware and vSpace™ virtualization software tap into this unused capacity so that it can be simultaneously shared by multiple users. Each pupil’s monitor, keyboard, and mouse connect to the shared PC through a small and very durable NComputing access device. The access device itself has no CPU, memory, or moving parts—so it’s rugged, reliable, and easy to deploy and maintain. By spreading out the cost of the shared computer, schools can provide many more stations for the same money.

Huge savings in time and money

Brick Township decided to migrate their entire school district to NComputing. “We realized we had finally found an affordable computing solution that really worked,” said Niebo. With the chosen solution, four users are able to use one PC, so Brick Township only needed to purchase 300 new computers instead of 1,100. They also have to buy 800 fewer PCs every 4 years as the old PCs become obsolete.

“Our total cost per seat with NComputing was \$196, compared to \$654 for a typical PC,” said Niebo. “We saved more than \$412,000 just in initial hardware costs with NComputing, enabling us to replace our old CRTs with flat-panel LCDs. That’s a huge amount of money. And we were able to leverage our existing investment in the elementary school PCs by putting up to five more seats in each classroom at a very low cost.”

Power consumption and IT support time slashed

“Deploying NComputing was incredibly fast and simple,” said Niebo. “And because they consume as little as 1 watt per user, versus 110 watts for a PC, we’ve saved more than \$27,000 in electricity this year. That buys a lot of books! We’ve saved even more in support costs because we need to maintain far fewer PCs.”

Brick Township has since deployed NComputing in its special education classrooms and elementary school libraries at a ratio of 11 seats to one PC. “Next up, we’ll be purchasing NComputing for our computer labs.”

“NComputing saved the day for our district,” concluded Mr. Niebo. “We are now making more educational resources available to our students at a lower cost than we ever thought possible.”

