

*Low-cost computing for education*

# NComputing makes the grade at Pepperdine University

## **Challenge**

*Meet the computing needs of varied learning environments across the University while facing a constrained IT budget.*

## **Solution**

*Deploy the NComputing L-series in computer labs and classrooms.*

## **Impact**

*Hardware costs reduced by 70%.  
Reduced demand on IT support enabled renewed focus on strategic initiatives.*

## **Partner**

*CDW, an NComputing Platinum partner, supported the deployment.*

Pepperdine is one of the leading universities in California with over 8,300 students spread out over two campuses in Southern California. Like most institutes of higher education, Pepperdine’s IT budget was tight, while demand for on-campus computing continued to grow.

With its computers nearing end-of-life, Pepperdine recognized that it needed a flexible computing solution for administrative, learning lab, library, classroom and public settings.

“Like every university, we had a limited budget. We had to find a computing solution that was affordable, secure, reliable and efficient, and met our varied requirements,” said Thomas Hoover, Director of Instructional Technology Support at Pepperdine.



*Pepperdine University deployed NComputing at its campuses.*

## **Hitting the books to find the right answer**

“We knew that low-cost desktop PCs were still too costly, and took up too much room on already crowded work areas,” said Mr. Hoover. “We checked out traditional thin clients, but the prices weren’t competitive, either.”

The Pepperdine IT team’s research led them to CDW, a leading provider of technology products and services. CDW suggested the NComputing virtual desktop solution.

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 virtualization software and hardware tap this unused capacity so that it can be simultaneously shared by multiple users. Each user’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, durable, and easy to deploy and maintain. By spreading out the cost of the shared computer over many users, schools can provide up to four times the number of stations for the same

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money. After running the numbers, the Pepperdine IT team decided to pilot the NComputing L-series solution in its International Studies and Languages (ISL) School’s computer lab.

“The L-series built-in microphone and stereo-out ports meant we could support the audio/visual needs of our language labs, and the USB port lets students save their work to a flash drive. The L-series support for widescreens also opened up interesting new possibilities for communicating with our students and faculty. And our pilot showed that NComputing would meet our performance requirements.”

### **Saving time and money throughout the campus**

“We set up 28 NComputing L-series with flat screens in the language lab connected to three dedicated PCs. NComputing’s performance is excellent, and we haven’t had any problems,” said Prakash Sharma, Pepperdine’s IT Manager, Graduate Campus Support. “We also mounted the L-series to the back of the new flat-screen monitors in the lab. That made a huge difference in available space for students’ books and papers.”

“If we had outfitted the lab with just low-cost PCs, the hardware costs alone would have been \$24,800,” added Mr. Hoover. “With NComputing we did the entire deployment for just \$7,100. That’s an incredible savings.”

Pepperdine soon tested other applications for the NComputing solution. “New student orientation is usually a very tough week for us. We offer all new students free configuration and virus scanning for their laptops,” said Mr. Hoover. “Setting up and tearing down for this service took hours and hours. Lines were usually long, and the students often got aggravated with the wait. We decided to set up 14 NComputing L-series as access stations for the students to use when completing the required forms online. We were able to process 650 students in just four days, with no lines. We figure NComputing saved us at least \$8,400 in hardware costs in just this instance. With time and labor savings in set up and tear down, we actually saved thousands more.”

Pepperdine found other innovative ways to leverage NComputing. “We hooked up a projector from a flash drive connected to the L-series USB port, and it worked great,” said Mr. Hoover. “That eliminated the need for another laptop—another huge savings. Now we’re looking at putting L-series with a mouse and keyboard in some of our study rooms connected to existing 37-inch LCDs so students can work on their PowerPoint presentations. We’re also using the L-series for digital signage.”

### **Applying lessons throughout the university**

Pepperdine has continued to deploy the NComputing solution across its campuses, saving thousands more in hardware costs. “We now only have to maintain three PCs in our ISL lab, instead of 28. Demand for IT support has been dramatically cut. That has freed up our time and budget so we can focus on instructional technologies, a strategic initiative for Pepperdine,” said Mr. Hoover. “We definitely plan to expand our NComputing deployment into every classroom, campus wide.”

