

# NETOP SCHOOL IDEAL SOLUTION FOR LAB MANAGEMENT AT WASHINGTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



*"After struggling with previous complicated and unreliable lab management systems, we knew we needed a better solution for our district's large student population. NetOp School has now been installed in 42 institutions throughout the K-12 school system and reaches a potential student body of 20,000."*  
- Software specialist Jimmy Green.



## Challenge

- Students struggle to keep focused in computer lab classes and are easily distracted by browsing the Internet, instant messaging or online games.
- Teachers spend too much time monitoring student activities on the computer and not enough time teaching.
- Classroom demonstrations are unwieldy and hard to manage – not all classrooms are set up to have a projector viewed by the entire class.
- Software installations are difficult throughout a large district with multiple institutions and technology coordinators not trained to install different software.

## Solution

- NetOp School deployed to 42 schools in Washington County school system, reaching a potential student body of over 20,000.
- Jimmy Green, district software specialist, purchased more than 1,800 NetOp School teacher and student licenses.
- Software deployed through MSI installation package and distributed through Novell network, making installation as easy as clicking an icon and letting the installation process run.

Ask any instructor what their main problems are when teaching using computers and they will undoubtedly mention the difficulty in keeping students on task and focused during class time. Computers have the ability to both teach and entertain, but attempting to use a teaching tool can be a source of frustration for instructors.

Jimmy Green, software specialist at Washington County Public Schools (WCPS) needed a software solution that could not only provide teachers with the peace of mind to teach in a computer lab, but also be reliable and scalable to fit into his district's large needs.

Washington County Public Schools are located in Western Maryland and are attended by more than 20,000 students. The school system includes 46 facilities and employs nearly 2,500 people, making it the third largest employer in the county of Washington.

## Challenge

"We had problem after problem with our previous system," said Green.

Before NetOp School, instructors at WCPS used solutions such as Deep Freeze, a software program that returns the computer back to its original configuration, no matter what changes have previously been made. This meant that students could download programs, change desktop settings or browse the Internet during class time. Once logged off, these changes would be discarded and the computer would return to its original configuration.

## Solution

NetOp School does not allow students to make changes to the classroom computer in the first place -- stopping downloads or display modifications before they even happen. Instructors can also use the software for keeping track of student progress by viewing each student's screen as a thumbnail image on their own screen.

If a particular student has decided to start an online chat, look at YouTube videos or play online games, the instructor has the ability to send an "Attention!" message to that computer, informing the student they should get back to work. Instructors also have the ability to block individual programs, block Internet access as a whole, or if needed, freeze the entire computer.

Using the software, teachers can track student progress on class work and see if an individual is struggling to grasp a particular concept, or if the whole class needs further explanation. They can then perform examples on their own screen and have the image displayed on each student computer, making demonstrations easier to follow.

If needed, the instructor can take control of a particular individual's computer and provide private assistance, or display that screen to the

## Results

- Thumbnail views of student computers let teachers quickly and easily view computer use without interrupting teaching.
- Demonstrations made easier by allowing students to view the instructor's screen from their own monitor.
- If a student is not paying attention and using their computer for personal use, the instructor has the ability to take control of that particular computer and shut down the Internet, block certain programs or freeze the entire computer.
- The teacher can also take over the computer to help the student complete an assignment or display the student's screen to the entire class to show everyone how to overcome a common problem.
- Features include the ability to record and document computer use for proof of classroom disturbance and allow instructors to take lesson plans home on a USB stick, without installing software on their PC.

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entire class, helping students with similar problems follow along.

## Results

"The software has been a huge improvement in classroom instruction and keeping student attention," said Green.

Green has purchased about 1,800 NetOp School licenses and is using them throughout the school system. He takes advantage of the convenient MSI installation package from NetOp and distributes the installation file to each school via a Novell network, making it markedly easier to deploy than the previous system. Each school can then install the program by clicking on the MSI file.

"It was hard to deploy the previous software to different schools and was unreliable. That has all changed with NetOp School," says Green. "It's really easy."

NetOp School has the ability to track and record student's computer use. This helps instructors provide proof that a student was off task, even when the student may claim otherwise. Another feature is the ability to let instructor's take lesson plans and classroom preparation home using a USB stick, without installing additional software on their PCs.

## Summary

NetOp School has been a huge success among lab instructors throughout the district. In particular, business education teachers in the school system use NetOp School to demonstrated complicated Microsoft Excel worksheets to a class.

The software is not just used in computer labs, but also in library media centers, to monitor that computer usage stays within a school's network policies. Anticipated future use of NetOp School includes installations in the district's three new elementary schools, all scheduled to open this year.



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