

Netop Vision7 Beta



Current version	7.0
Latest build	Build 6830 beta
Shipping from	December 17 th 2010

Release Theme

Usability is King!

At Netop we want to build a 21st century classroom management solution that supports teachers in their teaching and learning in IT labs. We also want to be more responsive to teacher needs and be the teacher's favorite classroom management solution.

At the beginning of 2010, we undertook a comprehensive survey of schools using Vision, visiting and speaking with teachers to understand what they liked and valued in Vision and what direction they felt Vision should take.

The overwhelming conclusion was that Vision is a much-loved solution with a clear divide between essential features in regular use and supplemental features that were occasionally used. Above all we proved what we already suspected: usability is the most important aspect for teachers.

Speaking with IT administrators we confirmed that reliability and functionality were most important to them. Above all we believe that IT administrators want the teachers they support to be confident and competent with the solutions in which schools invest.

So it was clear that usability is king for teachers, as this leads to greater teacher confidence in the use of Vision and successful adoption throughout schools IT labs. Based on this conclusion, Netop invested in redesigning the Vision user interface and a number of enhanced usability features that will help teachers, both new to Vision7 or upgrading, to quickly grow their confidence in using Vision7.

New Developments to Come

The launch of Vision7 announces a new era of Vision development with teachers' needs at its center. Building Vision7's user interface, new features will have simple controls tuned to support the everyday tasks of teachers. Strengthened resource management features will ensure teachers can manage the IT learning environment, keeping student on task while supporting differentiated learning.

New Features

Enhanced Usability for Teachers

This section describes the new user interface and the ideas and goals that informed the design. The target audience is a teacher familiar with Vision6 or earlier versions. However, new Netop Vision7 users and IT administrators might benefit from learning about the design ideas incorporated into Vision7 also.

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Listening to Our Users

Making fundamental changes to a popular and valued solution is a challenge, and right from the outset we knew that we had to investigate what our users needed and ask for their input. We interviewed and observed teachers using Vision while in their classes and got a lot of valuable input:

- Teachers put usability of the software as the highest priority
- Features that support teaching and learning activities were a common theme
- Teachers seldom receive software training, so we needed to ensure there would be little or no learning curve to starting to use Vision7
- Easy access to key control features, for example locking access to the web, must be clear and easy to find
- We learned that schools really like Vision and have few technical issues using the software
- Classroom management has become essential in computer labs and media center environments, where it is primarily used for monitoring and managing student computer usage

Furthermore, we have used extensive global surveys and a customer advisory board to help shape and direct Vision7, so our decision to listen to teachers has informed the major design decisions.

Quick to Pick Up

As school software training may only be offered to a few teachers and when the software is first installed, the new Vision7 user interface requires very little time to become proficient in its use. Whether new to Vision7, or upgrading, teachers will find the Vision7 user interface familiar and accessible as it is based on the Microsoft Ribbon popularized in application suites like Microsoft Office. Key classroom management tasks undertaken in the software have been enhanced so that workflows are more intuitive.

Improved Appearance and Clarity

With Vision7 we wanted to ensure that teachers have maximum use of the screen displaying student computer thumbnails. This meant removing the three Vision6 dashboard panes and integrating these features elsewhere in the interface. We have also gained clarity through the redesign of icons, adopting a modern look and greater differentiation between similar commands. We devised a rule set of icon metaphors with color encoding which, although subtle, helps inform teachers of an icon's command in an intuitive way.

Improved Functionality and Workflow

Our survey of teachers highlighted the most frequently used features so we wanted to ensure that these features were quick and easy to access: one mouse click away and positioned central to the screen. This is one of the reasons we chose to implement a simple tab-based Ribbon interface in Vision7. The features that teachers use often are located on one tab, grouped with related commands with the essential commands placed in the upper left to center area of the screen.

The tab-based Ribbon is familiar to most users of Microsoft Office applications like Word and Outlook, and this familiarity contributes to creating an easy transition for teachers new to Vision7.

To help teachers further, we included assistance in the form of extended ScreenTips on all features and commands. This assistance is not written in technical detail, but in everyday language.

Error Messages and Message Bar

Error messages in Vision7 have been revised with teachers' needs in mind. Explanations help inform teachers, allowing them to be more self-sufficient in resolving issues. Furthermore, some of the system notifications that do not require confirmation, are displayed in the message bar and after a short time automatically clear. Or, teachers can dismiss the messages whenever they wish.

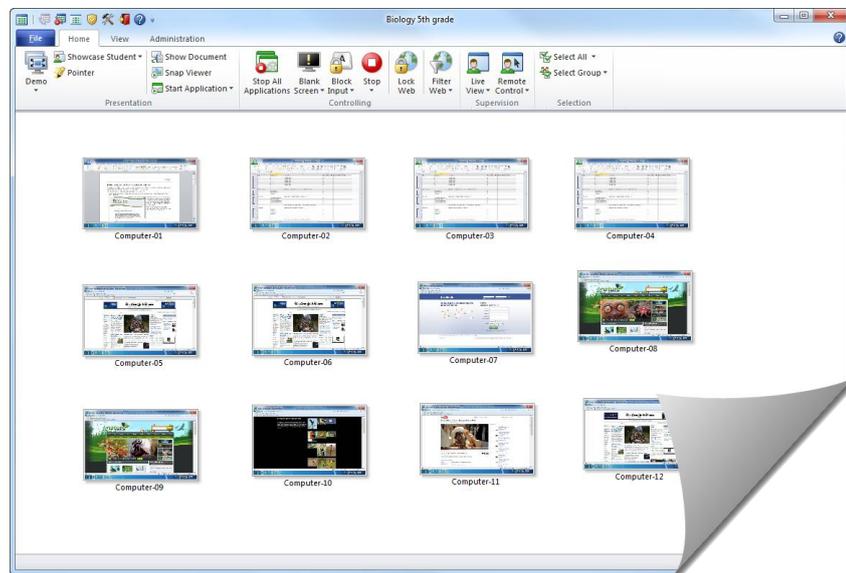
Introducing the Ribbon Interface

In Vision7 we placed all features and commands on the Ribbon:



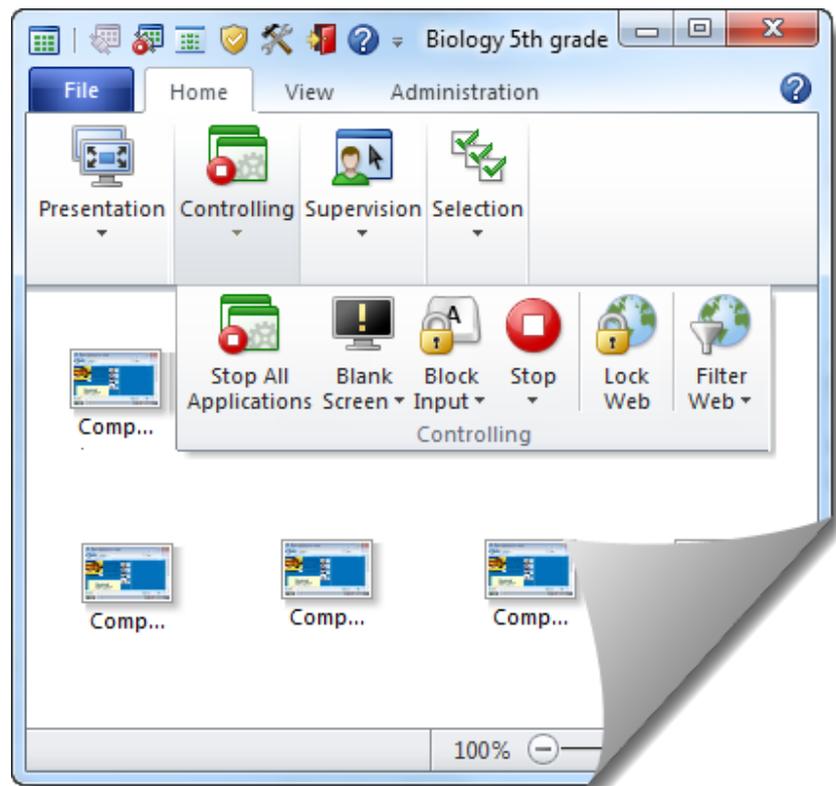
The Ribbon, at the top of the screen, presents an easy-to-browse set of features and commands organized into a set of tabs that represent the main functionality groups. The Ribbon provides one-click access to commands with clear icons and labels. Commands also have enhanced ScreenTips seen when the mouse pointer rests over a command icon.

Vision provides maximum space for student computer thumbnails:



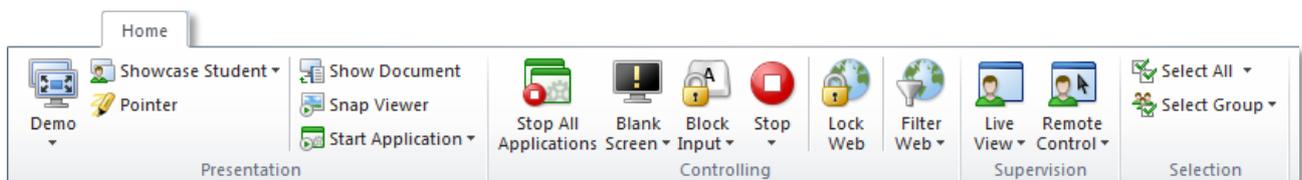
Teaching Alongside the Vision7 Dashboard

Vision7 offers a number of ways in which teachers can switch between open windows and the main Vision7 screen, the dashboard. When the dashboard is reduced in size, the Vision7 Ribbon responds by condensing in a sensible and efficient way. Commands are automatically incorporated into drop down menus while preserving access to the most commonly used and essential features.



The Vision shortcut toolbar now launches from a Ribbon button on the Administration tab, and by default is fixed in a position to the right on the screen. This avoids accidental selection of commands and does not distract teachers when using other applications. By not activating all screen elements of Vision7 at launch, teachers new to Vision can pace their learning and understanding of the features available.

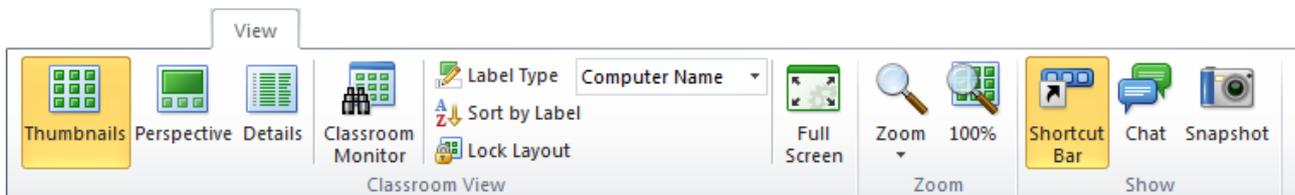
The Home Tab



The **Home** tab includes the commands most frequently used, like full-screen Demo, Blank Screen, Lock Web, Live View and Remote Control. They are placed in functionality groups: Presentation, Controlling, Supervision and Selection, so during instruction, a teacher has the essential commands easily accessible.

The **Selection** group includes the functionality from the previous Vision6 Groups pane.

The View Tab



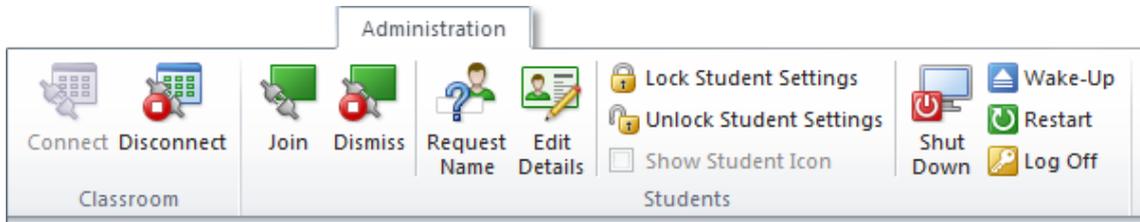
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The **View** tab offers different ways to view, label and sort student computers. The shortcut toolbar can be launched from here along with Vision's Chat and Snapshot features.

The Administration Tab



The **Administration** tab allows you to manage student computers, preparing for the next lesson by logging students off and re-starting them or shutting student computers down at the end of the lesson.

Unified License & Help

Vision7 incorporates former Vision6 plug-ins, and now only a single license is required, removing the need to manage or track different license keys in order to have access to the complete feature set.

Help documentation has also been rewritten with the teacher in mind, presenting the features in a context of performing various teaching actions.

Defect Fixes

Vision 6.9.1 did not block Internet Explorer 8 on 64-bit systems

The Lock Web feature did not block web access in Microsoft Internet Explorer 8 installed on 64-bit systems. This problem is now resolved.

Defect: DE5724

Known Issues

Sometimes Wake-Up feature does not work

If the computer has been shut down and has Wake on LAN enabled in BIOS, then Vision7 should wake the computer from the Wake-Up feature on the **Administration** tab. However, sometimes a student computer does not start.

Workaround:

Try clicking Wake-Up a few times and the computer will restart.