



Kansas School District Cuts Deployment Time by 80% with the UIU

Lansing Unified School District

As Technology Director of Lansing Unified School District, Bill Eckles manages a large and diverse number of computers and peripherals for students and staff.

The facilities for this northwest Kansas District include three school buildings and the district office. As Lansing's only full-time IT employee, Eckles, who was brought on-board in 2009, oversees a Windows 2008 Server network of nearly 2,000 computers, 1,200 peripheral devices, as well as 300 faculty and staff machines.

The Current Situation

Lansing uses Symantec Ghost cloning software to handle the deployment, rollouts and migration of its desktops and laptops. They maintain a wide variety of systems, utilizing a hand-me-down approach. When a new PC is acquired, the old one is re-deployed to another area in the District where it replaces an older or less powerful computer. As

is common with school districts, the majority of supported machines ultimately end up in student computer labs.

This swapping process continues until the end of the line is reached and a system is retired.

The Challenge

While making fiscal sense, this process requires Eckles to maintain computers that are up to ten years old. The combination of minimal human resources, varying ages of computers, and heavy student use leaves Eckles with a very long To-Do list.

"I call the UIU the
'Stress Reliever' "

Helping chip away at the backlog is pre-cloning preparation tool, the Universal Imaging Utility from Big Bang LLC. In a previous job with a Federal Defense agency, Eckles used the Universal Imaging Utility to help support their PCs.

The Universal Imaging Utility works alongside hard drive imaging tools and enables the imaging tool

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(Ghost, Altiris, Acronis, SCCM, etc.) to create and use a single hardware-independent hard drive image that can easily be deployed to any laptop or desktop regardless of manufacturer.

Why It Works

Eckles cited four main benefits to using the UIU while cloning computers:

Ease of use - the UIU requires no special training; load the program and follow the wizard as it walks you through the process.

Scalability to different systems - the UIU is hardware agnostic, so it works on virtually every business-class PC.

Maintaining multiple images with one base - the UIU enables adding, removing, or updating software and OS updates to one base image and using that new UIU image to deploy to a different set of hardware.

Updates to driver database - the UIU includes a comprehensive library of updated device drivers.

Prior to utilizing the Universal Imaging Utility, routine system refreshes were not done regularly at Lansing. Performing them was far down the list of priorities. In the most recent school year, Eckles' department fielded 1,500 tech requests which left little time for much else.

Incorporating the UIU into their imaging process has yielded quantifiable results. For instance, to Ghost-cast an image to a computer lab consisting of 40 PCs without using the UIU took a full 5 days due to different platforms and driver requirements.

With the UIU, that same computer lab is fully cloned in less than one day - which yields a full 80% savings on time and labor expense.

Eckles gets the same benefit when imaging the district's laptops too, since the same image is used to clone them as well. It is for this reason that he refers to the UIU as "The Stress Reliever."

By handling the routine, mundane tasks so efficiently, large scale improvements have been enacted by Lansing USD without requesting a larger budget or additional personnel. Examples include implementing a new Help Desk Support Ticket system and moving forward with a plan to perform off-site back-ups.

The Universal Imaging Utility affords Lansing USD the opportunity not only be more proactive in its management of computers, thereby keeping the software more current and properly patched, but also allows them to make genuine progress on other initiatives that benefit the students, teachers and staff.

About the Universal Imaging Utility

The Universal Imaging Utility (UIU) is developed by Big Bang LLC, a Milwaukee, WI-based software development, training and consulting company. Learn more about Big Bang and the UIU at www.uiu4u.com.

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