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Faronics Deep Freeze and Mobile County Public School System

CASE STUDY

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Faronics Deep Freeze and Mobile County Public School System

The Situation

Mobile County Public School System is a K-12 school district located in Mobile, Alabama. There are 100 schools in this district, comprised of elementary, middle and high schools. District wide there are 20,000 student, teacher and administrator workstations that run Windows XP. There are also 500 file servers that serve the district. To manage all this computing infrastructure, Mobile County Public School System has sixteen IT personnel, which compared to other education institutions of the same size, is about 80% smaller in IT support personnel.

The Problem

Mobile County Public School System faced day-to-day IT problems typical of any multi-user computing environment. Workstations were wide open to viruses, spyware, malware and accidental or malicious software changes. Malicious software changes were a big problem in the high, middle, and elementary school computers and computer labs, causing Mobile County's work order program to be inundated with service calls. Constantly trying to bring control to an uncontrolled environment was straining the school district's already under-staffed IT department. For George Mitchell, Hardware Supervisor, and Lead Technicians John Kennedy, Robert Gray, Heath Parker, Ty Wilson, and Ken Hannon the primary issues were the IT time involved in restoring damaged workstations to a functional state. Having IT personnel fix the issues while trying to keep up with new computer installs, projects, and managing the other 100 plus service calls that come into the work order program daily is an enormous, if not impossible, task with a staff of only sixteen.

The Solution

For George Mitchell and his colleagues at Mobile County Public School System, the answer was Faronics Deep Freeze Enterprise. Mobile County's original deployment consisted of Deep Freeze 5.7, with a total of 1500 licenses. Remote school console management was achieved by pointing Deep Freeze back to the local school's Windows 2003 server. This method proved tedious after some time, as 100 schools meant managing 100 consoles.

With the help of David K. Akridge, Mobile County Public School's IT Director who supplied the funding, George Mitchell and his team were able to rethink their strategy and upgrade to a district-wide license of Faronics Deep Freeze and move up to version 6.3. They also installed two Deep Freeze servers at their Main File Server Distribution Center for the district, and pointed all computer lab, teacher and student workstations to a centralized console. Seeing the benefits of their new approach, Mobile County is moving towards having all their workstations protected and managed by the Enterprise edition of Deep Freeze 6.3, as it gives the IT personnel complete control of the school system's computers from one console. Currently, Mobile County Public School System's deployment of Deep Freeze is approaching 4,000 workstations—the goal is to have half the district Frozen by the end of 2007.

“We look at it this way—we're taking our workstations back one at a time,” says George Mitchell. “And of course, once they are Frozen, we don't touch them again unless there is a hardware failure. It has helped our department use our energies toward putting out other burning fires, and not just workstation issues.”

The Benefits

Deep Freeze provides Mobile County School System with:

Absolute Protection

Deep Freeze guarantees Mobile County School System with 100% workstation recovery on restart.

Easy Deployment Options

Mobile County is able to deploy Deep Freeze via a silent install or on multiple workstations as part of a master image.

Flexible Configuration Options

Mobile County is able to schedule automatic Restart/Shutdown times, and schedule Thawed Maintenance periods to perform Windows and application updates.

The Deep Freeze Enterprise Console

The Enterprise Console provides Mobile County with the ability to view and control all their workstations from a single site. Being able to configure and maintain local and remote workstations makes IT's job much more manageable, as technical support personnel no longer need to handle trivial technical support issues.

Improved User Experience

Deep Freeze provides the students and teachers of Mobile County Public School System with a positive computing experience, free from spyware, malware, viruses, and system downtime. Students can count on computers being available for their school use, and teachers can focus on teaching in computer labs rather than troubleshooting workstation issues.



The Mobile County Public School System IT Staff, located in their state-of-the-art Datacenter and pleased with their Deep Freeze deployment.

About Deep Freeze

Deep Freeze enables administrators to protect a workstation's operating system and software without restricting user access. With every system restart, Deep Freeze resets the computer to its original protected state – right down to the last byte. Computing environments are easier to manage, expensive computer assets are kept running at 100% capacity, and workstations enjoy full immunity from software misconfigurations, viruses, malware, and spyware.

Deep Freeze can be easily deployed and maintained across an enterprise using a central console. Technology coordinators now have the power to protect hundreds or thousands of computers across a LAN, WAN, or over the Internet, an invaluable feature for administrators of several remote sites. Deep Freeze also features scheduled maintenance periods which allow updates and patches to be pushed out to workstations during times that best suit your organization.

Since Deep Freeze's 'reboot-to-restore' concept does not slow computers down or increase bootup times, it triumphs over image-based restoration technologies, which require both administrative initiation and system downtime in order to repair a system.

About Faronics

Faronics delivers market-leading solutions that help manage, simplify, and secure complex IT environments. Our products ensure 100% workstation availability, and have dramatically impacted the day-to-day lives of thousands of information technology professionals. Fueled by a customer-centric focus, Faronics' technology innovations benefit educational institutions, healthcare facilities, libraries, government organizations and corporations.

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