Charter school students learning with HP Thin Clients
HP hardware proves the ideal solution for National Heritage Academies

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– Max Hunsicker, director of IT services, National Heritage Academies

HP customer case study: Charter schools choose HP Thin Clients

Industry: Education

Objective:
National Heritage Academies needed to deploy a flexible, scalable computing platform that minimized IT support and service and centralized control over systems and applications, while maintaining acceptable performance levels.

Approach:
NHA purchased over 3,000 HP t5720 Thin Clients, with ongoing plans to purchase 150 additional units for each school as it is opened.

IT benefits:
• Increased network efficiency
• Reduced hardware maintenance
• Centralized control of network-based applications
• Reduced maintenance costs
• Longer life cycle for technology hardware

Business benefits:
• Faster, easier administration of standardized testing
• Easy-to-use computing form factor
• Flexible technology solution
• Lower cost of ownership
• Better insight into student performance

Thousands of students at 53 National Heritage Academies in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, North Carolina and New York are getting an early taste of the new wave in K-8 education: thin client technology.

An increasing number of schools across the nation, including public charter schools like those that NHA operates, are turning to HP Thin Clients as a cost-effective and less labor-intensive approach to equipping students and teachers with computing capabilities. Thin client hardware typically has a longer life span than traditional desktop PCs and is easier to maintain.

Supporting this trend, NHA purchased 3,000 HP Compaq t5720 Thin Clients, with plans to order an additional 150 units for each new school launched in the future. Within three years, the Michigan-based organization hopes to have all students and staff working with HP Thin Clients.
Customer

About National Heritage Academies

Michigan-based National Heritage Academies is a national education provider that contracts exclusively with charter schools to provide free public school education to more than 32,000 children in kindergarten through eighth grade at 53 schools in five states.

For more information, visit www.heritageacademies.com.

Contact the HP Customer Reference Program, 281-514-5755, for more information.

While most NHA charter schools will see a gradual phase-in of thin client hardware, NHA has outfitted its two newest academies—Stambaugh Academy of Youngstown, Ohio and Taylor Exemplar Academy of Taylor, Michigan—entirely with HP Thin Client hardware.

“We wanted to get these newest schools fully deployed from the start,” states Max Hunsicker, director of IT services at NHA. “Having two schools completely dedicated to the thin client environment will help us measure the effectiveness of the solution and strengthen our network-wide offering accordingly.”

Helping students achieve their best

The HP Thin Clients will be used for faster, easier administration of standardized testing to measure each student’s ability and performance on a regular basis. Results will be shared with parents, and will be used to determine individual aptitude, group strengths and areas where improvement is needed.

“We believe that HP Thin Clients will help us in our mission to provide students with a thorough understanding of core subjects, including language arts, science, math and history,” Hunsicker notes. “HP Thin Clients have enabled us to more quickly administer assessments that generate meaningful reports about student achievement. This in turn will yield greater insight into what’s working best for the students.”

HP Thin Clients are simple, dependable, manageable

Unlike standard desktop PCs, HP Thin Clients do not have hard drives, nor do they have programs installed on the device. Instead, HP Thin Clients access server-based applications, and are remotely controlled and supported by an IT administrator through a system network.

For example, in a thin client environment, an email program is installed on a network server, not on the device itself. Students or teachers are granted access to the application via IT administration. This keeps the hardware profile as streamlined as possible, and reduces the need to update applications and programs on each device. Rather, all users are updated simultaneously through the network server.

Key advantages in a thin client environment include centralized control of software, files and applications; greater savings on maintenance and support; easy setup and deployment; fewer support staff needed; longer hardware life cycles; and remote management of all devices. HP facilitates remote management through the Altiris® Deployment Solution™, a standards- and web-based tool designed for use with all HP i5000 series thin clients. This tool also helps accelerate out-of-the-box setup, with functions such as mass-deployment imaging and easy migration of user-specific data.

“The Altiris remote management tool is one of the most attractive features for the IT staff,” Hunsicker comments. “We’re able to manage our thin client network in its entirety from a single location. This helps us meet our customer demands for reliability, performance and support, while maintaining a lower total cost of ownership compared to desktops and laptops.”

NHA powers its network with an array of HP products, including HP ProLiant DL580 Servers, ProLiant DL380 Servers, ProLiant DL360 Servers, ProLiant DL360e Servers and HP StorageWorks SAN (storage area network) products.

High performance, small form factor

The HP Compaq t5720 is equipped with Microsoft® Windows XP Embedded and a low-power, high performance AMD Geode™ NX 1500 processor. This combination helps to deliver desktop-like features and support for local applications. Each HP Thin Client device is equipped with Flash memory and 512 MB of DDR RAM to support multiple applications running simultaneously.

Just 10 inches high, eight inches long and under three inches in width, the space-saving form factor of the HP Thin Client makes it easy to position on a desktop, under a desk or adjacent to a monitor. To reduce the space needed for each thin client, NHA connects each device to a 15-inch HP L1506 Flat Panel Monitor, allowing plenty of room on the desk for students to work.

For added protection and ease of use, every HP Compaq t5720 device ships with Sygate Security Agent preinstalled, making it easier for IT managers to lock down user settings and parameters.

To learn more, visit www.hp.com

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