



Company

- Middlesbrough College

Location

- Middlesbrough, UK

Industry

- Education

Web site

- www.mbro.ac.uk

Products

- LANDesk® Management Suite
- LANDesk® Patch Manager

“LANDesk® Management Suite enables us to install from a wider range of packages than before, and it adds a significant amount of functionality that we didn't previously have, including automatic OS patches and hardware inventory management.”

Gary Porritt
Core Systems Administrator

Middlesbrough College Simplifies Software Deployment and Improves Inventory Management With Avocent LANDesk® Management Suite

Overview

Located in the Tees Valley in Yorkshire, North-Eastern England, Middlesbrough College (www.mbro.ac.uk) provides further and higher education for 10,000 students. The College offers a wide variety of academic courses and vocational qualifications across business, engineering, construction, music, theatre, sports, computing, and more. A key aim of the College is to extend training opportunities to the entire local community, aided by its recent move to a new purpose-built 32,000 m² site in Middlehaven.

When Middlesbrough College moved from four separate sites to the new Middlehaven campus, the IT function took the opportunity to review all aspects of service delivery. The College had been using a centralised software distribution tool, and while this solution was a significant step forward from manual administration, there were nevertheless some shortcomings - in particular around security patching, software and hardware inventories, and the general flexibility of the software.

After reviewing several options - including the latest release of its existing software - Middlesbrough College selected LANDesk® Management Suite from Avocent as its new strategic platform for the centralised management of client systems. The LANDesk® solution was quick and easy to install, and has improved the flexibility and ease of software deployment. It has also improved inventory management for both hardware and software, enhanced security and reduced administrative effort.

Challenge

- Existing remote software deployment technologies offered relatively limited functionality
- Difficulty in monitoring software installation and usage led to inflated licensing costs
- Lack of automated software patching left the College exposed to potential security vulnerabilities
- Inability to automatically generate hardware inventory made system upgrades relatively slow and costly

Solution

- Middlesbrough implemented the LANDesk® Management Suite from Avocent, replacing its existing solution for operating system and software deployment.

Results

- Greater flexibility and more options in software deployment save time and effort for the IT function
- Software installation and patching is managed centrally, saving time and boosting security
- Server and network monitoring help to combat viruses and security threats
- Automated inventory and software licence management processes help ensure compliance and reduce licensing costs

Challenge

With the move to the new Middlehaven campus came the opportunity to review and improve existing network management practices. Several years previously, the College had introduced centralised OS and software deployment using a packaged solution - making considerable savings in time and effort, in addition to improving reliability through greater standardisation. As part of the move to the new site, the IT function decided to review other centralised management solutions, to see what additional benefits it could achieve.

“While the existing solution was working well and delivering strong savings, there were nevertheless some functional gaps,” says Gary Porritt, Core Systems Administrator. “We wanted greater flexibility in the types of software package that we could deploy, and wanted to enable automated security patch management for our Windows XP machines - both to save effort and to plug potential security holes more rapidly.”

Equally, Middlesbrough wanted to simplify and accelerate inventory management, both for software - to improve compliance with vendor licensing terms - and for hardware. There was a plan to ensure that all machines on the network had at least one gigabyte of RAM, which would have required significant manual effort simply to determine which machines needed upgrading, and with what type of memory.

Solution

Middlesbrough College reviewed several options, ultimately pitting the latest release of its existing solution against LANDesk® Management Suite from Avocent. Based on its extensive functionality, easy management and potential for rapid return on investment, the College selected the LANDesk® solution, using it to manage around 1,600 desktops and several hundred laptops.

“The LANDesk® software was impressively easy to install, and we were quickly up and running with only minimal support from an Avocent consultant,” says Gary Porritt. “LANDesk® Management Suite enables us to install from a wider range of packages than before, and it adds a significant amount of functionality that we didn’t previously have, including automatic OS patches and hardware inventory management.”

Middlesbrough College now has a single master operating system image for all machines - including standard-issue software such as Microsoft Office - available for remote installation by LANDesk® Management Suite on any machine connected to the network. The solution provides reporting on installed software, enabling the College to verify that it has the appropriate number of licences and to see whether software is actually being used by the intended people. It also automatically builds a detailed database of client devices on the network, right down to the level of individual components.

Results

LANDesk® Management Suite has built on the time savings provided by Middlesbrough College’s previous solution, providing greater flexibility and further reducing administrative effort. In particular, it has enabled the automated deployment of a wider range of software, and provides centralised security patch management.

“When a new Microsoft vulnerability is identified, we can auto-patch every machine on the network - saving a considerable amount of time and effort, and improving security,” says Gary Porritt. “LANDesk® Management Suite also provides important benefits in the area of inventory management. We can easily see when software is installed on a machine but not being used, and move the licence to a different machine where it’s needed. And it’s much simpler to ensure that we are in compliance with the terms of our various volume licensing deals.”

The discovery mode in LANDesk® Management Suite dramatically simplified and accelerated the planned upgrade to 1GB of RAM, automatically reporting on the location of machines requiring upgrades. “The hardware inventory management in LANDesk® Management Suite is impressively granular, enabling us to see remotely right down to which memory slot is free on the motherboard,” says Gary Porritt. “As we continue to explore new functionality in the LANDesk solution, the strong technical support from Avocent is helping us to achieve a rapid return on our investment in the software.”

About Avocent Corporation

Avocent delivers IT operations and infrastructure management solutions for enterprises worldwide, helping customers to reduce costs and simplify complex IT environments via integrated, centralized in-band and out-of-band hardware and software. Through LANDesk®, Avocent also is a leading provider of systems, security, and process management solutions. Additional information is available at: www.avocent.com.

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