

CFISD Migrates 39,000 Machines to Windows 10 Ahead of Schedule



Profile:

The largest recognized independent school district and the third largest overall in the state of Texas.

- 100 facilities
- 100,000 students
- 6,500 faculty
- 12,000 total employees

Location:

Cypress, Texas, United States

Industry:

Education

Website:

www.cfisd.net

Solutions:

- Unified Endpoint Management
- Endpoint Security
- Asset Management
- Xtraction Dashboards

Benefits:

- Accelerated migration to Windows 10
- Provided patch management and remote control for 70,000 machines
- Automated software delivery and OS updates to students and staff
- Saved hundreds of person-days per year and cut travel costs

Outgrowing Its System

Larry Barrios, Manager of the Device, Imaging, and Integration Team at Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District (CFISD), explains some of the district’s challenges: “Our mission is to help our students and educators achieve their full potential, and that means making sure they have the right tools at their fingertips. Our user community is highly diverse: not only do we have students across every academic discipline, but also teachers, food services personnel, transportation personnel, security personnel, and more. This means that we need to support a huge variety of software, confirm that updates and security patches are applied on time, and monitor software licenses so that we can ensure compliance. Given the large number of machines we manage, we rely on technology to help us automate our processes and run them remotely.”

The previous endpoint management software at CFISD provided—in theory, at least—centralized software deployment, patch management, and remote-control capabilities. In practice, however, the solution was no longer fit for purpose, and the gap between CFISD’s needs and the software’s capabilities was growing fast.

Search for the Right Solution

As the key criteria for the new solution, CFISD was looking for strong capabilities around remote management, software push, and inventory and patch management. Ease of use for end users was also vital: to avoid employing armies of technicians, CFISD is heavily reliant on user self-service, which frees up central staff from repetitive IT fire-fighting and enables a greater focus on strategic initiatives.

Lillie Swearingen, HW/SW Technical Analyst, adds: “We ran a proof of concept for the Ivanti solution in one of our middle schools, and it was impressive to see that Ivanti listened to our feedback and needs, then rolled out new functionality for us in the next release.”

Rapid Migration to Ivanti Along with Mass Migration to Windows 10

CFISD also deployed Ivanti® Xtraction, which employs visual reports and dashboards to bring business intelligence to IT management. During the rollout of the Ivanti solutions across the full estate of desktops and laptops, the CFISD team used Xtraction to display rolling statistics on a 70-inch monitor in its operations room.

“It was great to be able to monitor our progress and pace in terms of the number of machines re-imaged and the number of software packages built and deployed,” says Daniel Serwinek, HW/SW Technical Analyst. “We had an absolute cut-off date of July 31 to get off the old solution, or risk paying another year of licensing and support. Thanks to our planning, great work from the teams, and this ability to see our progress, we completed the migration of all 65,000-plus machines a week ahead of schedule.”

As part of the project, CFISD used the Ivanti imaging process to migrate all student laptops to Windows 10, representing 60 percent of its total fleet. In order to preserve software and documents required for the coming school year, teachers’ machines were converted in place by deploying the Ivanti agent, while the students’ machines received a completely fresh OS image. “Thanks to the Ivanti solutions and the dedication and skill of our teams, we were able to achieve everything in just two and a half months and we came in a week before the deadline,” says Larry Barrios.

Saving Time and Effort

Speaking to the ease of software distribution, Michelle Campos, Technology SW Specialist, said, “As an example, historically, we would have to go to all 54 elementary schools to install new testing software each year. Now we just have an automatic update job that runs overnight and on weekends, so we’ve already touched 4,000 computers without making a single on-site visit. In the past, one person could handle perhaps 120 machines a day, so we have probably already saved at least 30 person-days just for this one requirement.”

End-users are also feeling the benefits of the new solution, as Derly Buentello, Food Service HW/SW Technical Analyst, explains: “The user authentication in the previous solution was dysfunctional, and people sometimes had to wait 10 minutes to log into a machine. With Ivanti, it’s 10 to 20 times faster.”

Nancy Grella, Assistant HW/SW Technical Analyst, adds: “Previously, the remote control was also very hit-and-miss, so we often had to drive over to fix a user’s problem, potentially leaving them waiting for 30 minutes. Today, with the Ivanti solution, we can typically get them back up and running within a couple of minutes, improving everyone’s productivity and boosting user satisfaction.”

Value-add Solution

Looking to the future, the PC support team at CFISD will continue to build out policies, processes, and reports in its Ivanti solution, further increasing the automation and efficiency of managing its endpoints.

“The time we’re already saving with the Ivanti solution is time that we can reinvest in improving our whole approach to endpoint management, ultimately improving the future prospects for our students,” says Larry Barrios. “We’re no longer occupied with repetitive, low-value tasks, so we can focus on setting up the solution for seamless self-service, which will deliver greater value to the district. Most important, the solution keeps our end users happy, productive, and equipped with secure, reliable, fully licensed software. We are very happy with the solution and look forward to developing our relationship with Ivanti.”



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1 800 982 2130



sales@ivanti.com

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