Absolute Manage Provides Valuable Computer Asset Management at Northwestern

Recognized as one of the most distinguished private universities in the country, Northwestern University is a private research university in Evanston, IL with 12 undergraduate and graduate professional schools and areas of study. As the smallest of 12 schools at Northwestern, the School of Education and Social Policy (SESP) cultivates an intimate and supportive community for 700 students and 23 faculty members. The SESP is nationally and internationally known for innovation and, in diverse and original ways, explores new practices, policies—and technologies—to improve learning and development.

The Cross-Platform Challenge: Macs and PCs

As the Senior IT Consultant with the SESP, Ryan Nix is responsible for the technology core of the program. When Nix first joined Northwestern, the school had close to 600 computers across four buildings on campus with the majority laptops. Used primarily by faculty and staff, the deployment was divided into approximately 400 Macs and 200 PCs based on different instructional needs, which also accounted for both qualitative and quantitative differences in the software that resided on them. "From an asset management perspective," Nix explains. "We had a cross-platform environment and no single way of efficiently managing inventory, adding a new machine in a timely fashion or updating software across our computer population." Selecting Absolute Manage by Absolute Software was one of the first things Nix did in his position – immediately recognizing the cross-platform capabilities as the answer to Northwestern's Mac and PC asset management needs.

Time Saved: Routine Maintenance Tasks Automated

Absolute Manage is a lifecycle management solution that allows customers to remotely manage PC, Mac, iOS, Android, and Windows Phone devices from a single console. Customers can engage with their deployment and perform standard maintenance routines as well as take strategic and responsive measures based upon the requirements of each device. Absolute Manage provides authentic cross-platform capabilities allowing IT administrators to manage their entire deployment from a Mac or a PC.

"Implementing and learning to use Absolute Manage was easy, and the impact on our team and the services we provide to SESP was felt immediately," emphasizes Nix. "I think we were most surprised that such a complex system could be installed and integrated into our overall architecture so simply."

With Absolute Manage, the SESP IT team uses a single console for automating time-consuming IT processes such as asset inventory, patch management and imaging. From an asset inventory perspective, the solution is used to gather hundreds of hardware and software data points from Mac and PC computers over the school's network. The data collected by Absolute Manage can be easily exported into a variety of file formats that the team can use to feed asset details into its Web Help Desk application.

Absolute Manage also solves the time-consuming problem of setting up new computers. With a single automated process, the solution installs a complete operating system and standard applications without any interruption to users. For Mac users, a disk image can be deployed while the computer is in use. Folders, network settings and Directory Access settings are automatically migrated so, upon reboot, the user has a new Mac OS with no interruption to productivity.

Nix's team also experienced a dramatic improvement with patch management work, allowing them to centrally manage and install patches. Previously, the team had to download updates from Apple or Microsoft and host them internally for people to access. With Absolute Manage, they now automatically add required updates across both platforms including the ability to track and report on the patch status of all computers at the school. "Faculty and staff no longer need to try to remember to perform updates. Now we do it for them – they don't even need to know – so they can focus on their academic work," Nix said. "The benefits are clear. We know everyone on our network is using the latest software versions, ensuring that our investment into each device is protected by the latest security updates."

The Absolute Manage Fan Club

According to Nix, the time savings Absolute Manage has driven for SESP's IT team have been considerable. With a small six-member group time is always at a premium. Now with some tasks, one person can do the job of two or even three. The group also receives significantly fewer support calls. With automated patch management alone, faculty and staff are no longer calling in bugs due to outdated software on their machines. The deployment of Absolute Manage to all of the school's devices has also translated into cost savings as no additional IT resources were required to provide the increased levels of service to the school. In fact, when compared to other schools at Northwestern, the SESP has fewer IT staff than others, and Nix attributes this directly to the operational benefits that Absolute Manage has created. "I'm a big fan," Nix enthuses. He adds, "The standard at Northwestern is essentially delivering whatever our faculty and staff need to do their jobs well. By simplifying our daily management tasks and driving higher quality IT service, Absolute Manage is helping us to meet this standard."

About Absolute Software

Absolute Software Corporation (TSX: ABT) is the world leader in firmware-embedded, persistent endpoint security and management solutions for computers and ultra-portable devices. Positioned as a Visionary vendor in Gartner, Inc.'s Magic Quadrant for Client Management Tools, Absolute's solutions – Computrace, Absolute Manage, Absolute Secure Drive, and LoJack for Laptops – provide organizations with actionable intelligence to prove compliance, generate fast ROI, reduce overhead, manage BYOD, and deliver comprehensive visibility and control over all of their endpoints. The Company's Computrace technology is embedded in the firmware of computers, netbooks, and tablets by leading computer manufacturers. For more information about Absolute Software, visit www.absolute.com

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