



NetSupport School 7

Along with network support, remote control software is an ideal tool for deploying distance learning facilities and few do this better than NetSupport School (NSS). Based on the excellent NetSupport Manager remote control software, NSS has been fine-tuned to deliver a superb range of tools allowing teachers and trainers alike to deliver classes or training sessions to any number of students. There are no physical constraints either as they are delivered over the network so your students can be anywhere in the same building and with the Internet in the equation - anywhere in the world.

NSS v6 impressed when Network Computing reviewed it in June 2002 and this latest version brings in a wealth of new features. The Testing Module looks the most interesting as it allows teachers to create and deploy customized tests and exams. The possibilities here are endless as NSS provides wizards for creating a range of tests such as multiple-choice and each question can have video, text, pictures and sound files linked to it. All exams are maintained in a separate database which commendably requires a valid username and password to access. A separate console is used to publish exams to selected users and the tests are started simul-

taneously on each system. A counter advises them of the remaining time and when all users have completed the tests or the time runs out, NSS gathers the results together and collates them into a table that can be printed out. Once you've run your tests it can be useful to get some immediate feedback from students and you can use the new Instant Survey to fire a question at your students which requires either a Yes or No answer. NSS keeps a real-time tally of all replies and gives you an at-a-glance readout of the percentages as they come in.

In a classroom environment it's important to have some control over what your pupils can do on their local PCs and NSS now includes an application control module. By placing applications in approved or restricted lists you can decide what they can run and these settings can be customised for different groups so you can have a range of controls for each class. This feature also extends to the Internet as a separate web control module allows you to determine what web sites can and cannot be accessed based on their URL. The lists are easily created as you can view all NSS systems from the Tutor interface and see what web pages they are accessing in real-time. If you don't like the look of any just right-click on them

and add an entry directly into the restricted list. Last but certainly not least NSS now supports screen capture of a client's screen which can be saved to a file along with details of the system.

NSS is very simple to install and a deployment utility speeds things up although this still only supports Windows NT, 2000 and XP systems. From a system running the Tutor component you can swiftly scan the network and automatically populate groups with systems running the Student utility. The new interface is extremely well designed and allows you to create multiple groups for easier management and identification. A smart feature is the ability to position each client icon to represent a PC's physical location in the classroom. As a teaching and training tool NSS is in the enviable position of having little, if any, serious competition. It simply excels in its field and the new features are valuable additions which make one of the top products in this market even better. **NC**

Product: NetSupport School 7
Supplier: NetSupport Ltd
Tel: 01778 382270
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Price: Up to 100 users -
£21:86 each ex. VAT