The Wellington Academy

NetSupport DNA Case Study
With Michael Bush - IT Network Manager

Tell us a little bit about your school/organisation...

The Wellington Academy comprises of 250 staff and 1700 students split across three schools - two being primary and one being secondary education, including a sixth form.

How many devices and which platforms do you have NetSupport DNA installed on?

NetSupport DNA is installed on roughly 1050 machines, with approximately half of them being laptops and the other half desktops - all of which run Windows 10.

Can you tell us about some of the challenges you previously faced and why NetSupport DNA was the software of choice?

With the previous remote support product we were using, we were finding it increasingly unmanageable due to constant updates and crashing. As our time is becoming more and more valuable due to budget and staffing cuts, we chose to move to NetSupport DNA in the hope it would save us both time and effort - and it has! We find NetSupport DNA to be a go-to tool that you know will work when you get there, which is a refreshing change.

As security is becoming an increasing risk, we make use of the USB control list in NetSupport DNA to block the use of portable media across the school. This has helped us to reduce the risk of sensitive material getting into the wrong hands.

Working in schools, we have to be able to report on what users are doing at certain times. With NetSupport DNA, it's so easy to use the filters to pin down where people are and what websites and applications they have been using. Some applications make it such a chore to get information out, so NetSupport DNA has helped us reduce the time spent when we have to run these reports.

Can you tell us how the software is currently being used?

We largely use NetSupport DNA as a remote support tool for staff and students. As we cover multiple sites and 12 buildings, it's vital we have remote support available to be able to provide the solid level of service that is expected.

Also, we have the teacher console set up in the IT suites for staff members to be able to monitor and demonstrate to students, with the added benefit of being able to grab their attention through features such as locking screens.

We haven't delved too much into the power management side of things, but we do have scheduled shutdowns nightly for all laptops and desktops, with the exception of a few who are set up to dial in from home.

With rising energy costs, are you benefiting from using the Energy Monitoring feature?

I believe so, yes. We have always had power management in place for devices, however, it was a one solution for all. With NetSupport DNA, we can shut down student PCs shortly after school has finished, teacher PCs a bit later on and then leave office PCs until late evening. I know this functionality is available in other software packages, but, with NetSupport DNA, it's easy.

What type of settings do you have with the Power Management feature, and has it impacted staff in any way?

Due to the home working situation, we don't have much of a difference during the day for the majority of devices. However, we focus more on the days in which staff are working - we don't always know which days people will be working, but we have the flexibility to allow staff to access machines when they need to, and still shut down devices overnight.

As for impacting staff, the answer is no as we've always had power management in place. NetSupport DNA has allowed us to fine tune existing policies to further save power without affecting users.

NetSupport DNA includes NetSupport School (classroom management). How do your teachers find using it?

Excellent. We do find it's more the teachers who are permanently based in an IT suite who use this. However, we do have laptop trolleys which can be useful as they move around the building too, so it helps to keep an eye on these.

Overall, NetSupport School is a great classroom management tool as well and can help focus the students' attention by locking the screens.

Has NetSupport DNA been used to inform your digital stategy?

Yes, we used NetSupport DNA to report on devices and to determine the next batch of devices due to be upgraded based on hardware specifications, which

assists us with our rolling replacement programme.

With the feature updates in Windows 10 only being supported for X amount of months, NetSupport DNA has helped us with managing the upgrades during the school holidays. It's vital we make the most of our time, and by using the tools built into NetSupport DNA, we can easily get information and spend more time doing the jobs we need to.

Do you/other staff have any favourite features?

From the feedback I've had, the teaching staff mostly enjoy the ability to be able to focus a group of students. If they are misbehaving on the computers, the teacher will lock screens, ban internet etc to bring them back to task.

In terms of remote support, I like that we have the ability for the computer and user lists to be able to mimic the structure of our Active Directory. Even though there is a search, this makes it much easier to navigate.

All of the features in NetSupport DNA we use are fantastic.

How would you sum up NetSupport DNA in one sentence?

An all-in-one software solution to suit all needs from IT support to classroom learning.

How have you found working with NetSupport?

Excellent! As long as the price stays reasonable, we don't have any reason to go elsewhere.

The level of support we receive is brilliant, too. We all know there will be bugs or issues with all software, but, due to the fast responses and helpfulness of the support team, it doesn't fill me with dread having to contact them because you know you'll get the answer you need.

Would you recommend NetSupport DNA to others?

Yes, definitely!

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