

Stark State College of Technology

STARK STATE COLLEGE AUTOMATES IMAGING AND INVENTORY WITH ALTIRIS, SAVING THOUSANDS OF TECHNICIAN HOURS EACH YEAR

THE ALTIRIS® SOLUTION:

Altiris® Client Management Suite™
Altiris® Service & Asset Management Suite™
Wise Package Studio® Professional Edition
Dell Client Manager

SERVICES:
ITS

CUSTOMER SNAPSHOT:

NO. OF USERS: 1,365 PCs;
120 laptops for student use

NO. OF SERVERS: 18

HARDWARE: Dell

OS: Windows XP for PCs;
Windows 2003 for servers

LOCATIONS: 5

ABOUT STARK STATE:

Stark State College of Technology is the largest of five colleges and universities in Stark County, Ohio, and the state's largest technical college with an enrollment of more than 8,500 credit students and ~4,000 non-credit students. In 2006, the U.S. Department of Education ranked Stark State College 7th in the nation among the top 50 fastest-growing, public two-year colleges with 5,000 to 9,999 students. Stark State offers 48 associate degree programs in the areas of business technologies, engineering technologies, health technologies, information technologies, public service technologies and general studies. In addition, the College offers 11 one-year certificate programs approved by the Ohio Board of Regents. (www.starkstate.edu)

THE CHALLENGE

- > Automating imaging and deployment process
- > Implementing an asset inventory and tracking system
- > Improving installation speed of mission-critical applications

THE BUSINESS VALUES

- > Using Altiris Client Management Suite, Stark State College automated its imaging and deployment process, reducing its semiannual reimaging of PCs from at least one month to just several days
- > Stark State College automated its manual asset inventory and tracking system with Altiris Service & Asset Management Suite, allowing it to accurately and thoroughly track assets in real time and generate inventory reports in minutes
- > Wise Package Studio allows Stark State College to automatically load software packages over the network in a matter of minutes, helping to meet professors' last-minute requests for classroom applications

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

Jeff Lash, Director of Academic Computing

THE INTERVIEW

ALTIRIS: Stark State College has grown significantly in the past several years. What challenges has this created for your IT department?

JEFF: Student enrollment more than doubled in the last five years. During that time, the number of computers available for student use tripled, but our IT staff did not. The biggest challenge we faced was imaging the PCs. The images were hardware-dependent and we had more than 40 separate images—as well as a wide variety of applications—which we loaded manually while creating the images. An educational environment is very dynamic, and it was hard for us to quickly respond to the changing needs of professors and students. If a class moved from one room to another at the last moment, and we received a call from the professor saying Auto-CAD was not installed in the new room, we would have to scramble to grab the image, load it on a PC, update it and then reimage all the computers in the new classroom. It seemed as if we were constantly operating in emergency mode. As a technical college, we basically run on computers. If the PCs are not working or don't have the right software installed, students can't learn and that's not acceptable. So our IT role is central to the mission of the college, and we could not go on operating as we were.

ALTIRIS: How did you resolve your imaging problems?

JEFF: With Altiris Client Management Suite. Twice a year, before each semester, we have to reimage nearly every machine in the college to update the software applications for the incoming classes. We were under a lot of pressure because we only had about four weeks to build all the images and manually distribute them to each PC before the first day of school. For

example, we had Photoshop installed in six different labs, which meant we had to create six different images just for those rooms alone. Client Management Suite allows us to build a single, hardware-independent image that works on every machine regardless of its make or model. And we can load the images over the network without visiting a single computer. We save hundreds if not thousands of technician hours a year just on this task alone. With Altiris, we can complete our twice-a-year reimaging procedure in a matter of days versus a month or more.

ALTIRIS: How do you install your other applications?

JEFF: We used to install them manually on the images. We had to touch each machine. Now, with Wise Package Studio, we create a package of applications that we install over the network in a matter of minutes by simply dragging and dropping one icon onto another. These Altiris solutions solved our other big issue: responding to last-minute changes. Now if a professor switches classrooms, we can take advantage of the integrated wake on lan technology to distribute the software overnight, when the rooms are not in use. In this way we can install the appropriate applications in time without ever leaving the IT department.

ALTIRIS: Why did you choose Altiris?

JEFF: We mentioned the problems we were having to our Dell representative, and he suggested we look into Altiris. After researching the leading client management vendors and seeing an Altiris demonstration, it was clear that Altiris was the solution we were looking for. But what clinched the deal was the cost. Being a college, we are on a tight budget. We needed a full-featured product that delivered high performance at a great price, and Altiris met both needs.

ALTIRIS: How long have you been a Dell shop?

JEFF: For more than six years. We were having trouble with the brand we were using at the time. We switched to Dell equipment, and it has performed very well ever since. Additionally, Dell not only provides a single point of contact and support for our computers, laptops, printers and servers, but it also reimburses us for doing our own warranty work. Our Technicians go through a web based Dell training and certification program which allows them to order warranty replacement parts via a website. This means that they don't have to spend any time calling Dell to get the replacement parts that we may need. Finally, but not of least importance, the price fits our budget, so we couldn't be happier with the relationship.

ALTIRIS: What is the value of using Dell equipment with your Altiris solutions?

JEFF: BIOS updates used to be time-consuming, hands-on and cumbersome to do. Using Dell Client Manager, BIOS updates are performed with a few clicks of a mouse. We like the seamless transition between Altiris and Dell. Also, if I need more Altiris licenses, I just call my Dell representative and he takes care of it.

ALTIRIS: After imaging and deployment, what was your next biggest challenge?



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—JEFF LASH

*Director of Academic
Technology Services*

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—JEFF LASH

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ABOUT ALTIRIS

Altiris offers a full line of Web-enabled solutions that empower organizations to easily manage desktops, notebooks, handhelds and Windows, Linux and UNIX servers throughout the IT lifecycle. Altiris provides fully integrated, complete systems management solutions for client and mobile, server, and asset management. Altiris' vision is to automate, simplify, and reduce the cost and complexity of IT lifecycle management with a rapid return on investment. For more information, visit www.altiris.com.

JEFF: Inventory. We tracked inventory manually with a spreadsheet. It needed constant updating and if I didn't touch it for a few weeks, I would have to spend a half-day or more making it current. Even then, human error ensured it never reflected our actual inventory. I often had to ask technicians to run to a classroom and see if the PCs' configurations matched the spreadsheet.

ALTIRIS: How long does it take to perform an inventory check with Altiris Service & Asset Management Suite?

JEFF: A matter of minutes and it's completely accurate in real time. I can see how many PCs are in each room, the number of peripherals, the applications installed—everything. It's a tremendous help when it comes to budgeting and forecasting future purchases.

ALTIRIS: Did you install Altiris?

JEFF: Yes, we installed Altiris with the help of ITS, an Altiris Partner. We completed the proof of concept in early July and were so enthused about Altiris that we wanted to roll it out for the fall semester which begins the end of August. So we had to do a rush deploy. ITS gave my staff a week of intensive training, then we went to work. By opening day, we had Altiris installed

in 75 percent of the classrooms. I considered that a huge success considering the deadline we had to work with. We never could have done it without ITS. Their ability to transfer their expertise to my technical staff shortened the learning curve and allowed us to take advantage of our investment right away. The money I invested in training was well worth it and I would recommend ITS to anyone.

ALTIRIS: Has customer service improved since implementing Altiris?

JEFF: Yes. The faculty, staff and students are much happier because they have the applications they need when they need them. And we can respond to their IT requests in a fraction of the time it took us before. Another huge benefit is that Altiris allows us to grow without adding more IT personnel. Instead of building images for four weeks straight twice a year, my technicians are working on more important tasks.

ALTIRIS: What advice do you have for other organizations facing challenges similar to yours?

JEFF: I would definitely suggest they look into Altiris. With Altiris, we can do it all—BIOS and Windows updates, patches, software installations—without ever touching a PC.

