NetSupport School

Emerson PSS
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How did Emerson PSS use NetSupport School prior to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Before the pandemic, we used NetSupport School for virtual classes that we occasionally taught for classes comprised of students outside of the United States, from areas such as Ireland, South America and others. NetSupport School allowed us to teach to students who connected up via GoToMyPC. NetSupport School allowed us to "see" their screens and help them adjust/correct/troubleshoot workshops during the course of our class day.

How has your use of NetSupport School changed since the COVID-19 pandemic?

When the pandemic appeared to threaten our day-to-day in-person teaching abilities, we contacted Jim at NetSupport Inc and he quickly helped us ramp up our modest NetSupport School account to one that allowed up to 75 students at the same time. The configuration for each workstation was easy to set up for various classes and the Tutor setup for instructors supplies us with ample opportunities to interact and even transfer files and messages. The Tech option is a tool I have within my laptop and on a VM within our system for whenever we need to make mass-management changes, such as reconfiguring classrooms.

" **NetSupport School is flawless.** "

At present, we use 75 licenses across as many as 52 workstations – supporting 4 classrooms of 12 students each and an additional classroom with 4 systems plus our team of instructors. Each workstation has GoToMyPC to allow students to connect up to our VMs and NetSupport School works seamlessly and flawlessly across each classroom. On occasion, when teaching students in China, we need to change the keyboard language but could do so easily with the NetSupport configuration abilities.

What does a typical classroom setup look like?

A typical classroom setup for an instructor is a two-screen setup with an instructor-assigned laptop. PowerPoint slides are set up for one screen and we present that via Webex, Adobe Connect or Teams. The second screen has the NetSupport School window with the students visible in a 4x3 layout.

What are the main things you use NetSupport School for?

We present slides, give examples, etc. and the students then perform workshops. We can easily see any and all of their work, giving us an idea whether they are doing the work, receiving errors or are finished and ready to continue. When teaching, we limit the student's ability to log into the system during off hours by blanking the screen. When we do "open" up the classroom, we simply unblank the screens. We can also easily distribute files (typically locked PDFs) to students for their own use and research. As we usually have HD resolution screens within HD resolution monitors, we "scale" the screens to fit and on a good 4k monitor or TV, we can easily see most detail of any and all screens.

As for the VM's on our servers, I use the "Tech Console" feature either on my laptop or parked on a VM on the same bank of servers. We are able to easily log off systems, log back in as admin and make changes that can only be done at that level – then easily mass-log on/off on the student account. This not only saves at least 30 minutes per class setup, but also allows us to do so from remote so that if we need to make last minute changes to classrooms, etc., a simple internet connection is all we need. Setting up 4 classrooms does, in fact, save us 2 hours of manual logging/in/out/in for each workstation. Thank you for that feature in particular! 😉

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We typically assign a class identifier such as "CR5" for my virtualization class. This requires me to initially assign each PC in the classroom to that classroom's configuration number such as "CR5" for Classroom #5. Now that each PC in each classroom is associated with a classroom, an instructor can connect their laptop to the network in that classroom, change their assignment in "Tutor" to said classroom and the workstations appear automatically. When they are done and move to another classroom for a different class, they simply change their own assignment.

For virtual classrooms, we have an "instructor VM" assigned to each classroom that has NetSupport School pre-configured for that classroom. We "turn off" the "Tutor" configuration on unused instructor VMs until we log into them – and then configure them as "Tutor" once we log in. This prevents issues with two systems competing to host a class.

During the worst part of the pandemic, we conducted entire week-long classes, from home, to students also working from home, without anyone actually present in our classrooms. An amazing ability that not only allowed us to remain profitable but due to lack of travel and equipment shipment for in-person/on-site classes, helped us actually break our sales record from the previous year. We capitalized and it paid off.

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As we have recently begun in-person teaching, but with masks and social-distancing, we can use NetSupport School to maintain social distancing and see/interact with students' screens, in the classroom, with respect and security of health protocols.

Do you have any final thoughts on NetSupport School?

NetSupport School is flawless. To date, with thousands of students participating in week-long classes, over the pandemic period, we have yet to see a single failure of NetSupport. It is a solid product that works well with Teams, Webex, Adobe Connect and GoToMyPC, as well as Splashtop (remote viewer similar to GoToMyPC). Configurations of classes, which are done each Friday, can be done by individual instructors, typically with a small window of training, and to be honest, I'm rarely contacted about any problems with these.