



Customer Snapshot: The Hill School

Carpe Diem – America's Most Wired School "Seizes the Day" with Paragon

Customer:

The Hill School

Challenge:

With an IT staff stretched to the limit, the most wired school in America needed a KVM solution that was powerful enough to provide access to their growing number of servers, yet easy to set up and administer.

Solution:

Raritan's Paragon KVM switch

Benefits:

The Hill School has saved thousands of dollars that would have been spent on monitors and additional staff.

The Challenge

What do Hollywood director Oliver Stone, former Secretary of State James Baker III, Time Inc. editor in chief Norman Pearlstine, and JP Morgan/Chase chairman of the board Douglas A. Warner all have in common? They are all alumni of The Hill School, a 150 year-old private school in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. Original Andrew Wyeth paintings grace the walls of the school's dining room. And, most recently, original photos of Abraham Lincoln, taken by his photographer Matthew Brady three days before his assassination, were discovered in the school's archives.

Who would have guessed that a school so rich in history would also be named the most wired school in America by E-School News Magazine? Rick Bauer, who heads The Hill School Information Services Department and doubles as CIO and teacher of theology, encountered some initial resistance to his vision of integrating computers into the learning process. "When I joined four years ago, we were doing missionary work to gain approval from the school to purchase more technology tools. Now, we are at the point of 'I need more server space' and 'I need more computers and software apps.' And, these requests are now being driven by end users and faculty," said Bauer. Each Hill School student is equipped with a laptop. Bauer even teaches networking courses to students so they can serve as front end technical support should their fellow students have problems in the dorms with their laptops.

In the midst of this "technology revolution", The Hill School was experiencing growing pains in its data center with more servers, limited space and minimal IT staff. In fact, like Bauer, most of his IT staff split their time teaching. "We take pride in what we do at Hill and wanted a functional, yet aesthetically appealing data center without wires poking out and equipment lying around," said Bauer. "We depend on our 40 servers to manage the 100 courses we offer online, to ensure that each student receives a network and email account, to process e-commerce transactions using an ERP SQL database, and to run an e-learning Web site." Finally, with his stretched staff, Bauer needed a powerful KVM solution that was easy to set up and administer.



"Paragon is a testament to the reliability and scalability of a KVM solution."

The Solution

When Bauer arrived in 1998, The Hill School was using Raritan coaxial-based KVM switches in the data center. However, as Bauer expanded the data center with more extensive server racks, snaking the heavy cable through ceilings became a bit unwieldy. Bauer looked at other manufacturers but did not see any that could equal Raritan's commitment to improvement. "Raritan is not content with the status quo and continually enhances its solutions. I like rewarding that type of company, especially with tech dollars so dear."

When Bauer received his award winning Paragon® with Cat5 Simplicity™, he was amazed that he was able to configure the entire system in 20 minutes. "Paragon worked as advertised and very few network devices can claim that," said Bauer. He also loves the flexibility of using Paragon for multiple users who need to access servers simultaneously. "We can have one administrator inputting account information for a student while another is running diagnostics," he said.



Raritan Computer, Inc., founded in 1985, is the leading provider of KVM (keyboard/video/mouse) and remote management solutions for access and control of servers and other network devices. With 18 consecutive years of profitable growth and technical innovation, Raritan makes products that are used to control millions of servers at more than 35,000 network data centers, computer test labs, and multi-workstation environments around the world. From the small business to the enterprise, Raritan's complete line of compatible and scalable KVM and remote connectivity products offers IT professionals the most reliable, flexible, and secure out of band solutions to manage data center equipment, while improving operational productivity.

The Results

The Hill School has been using Paragon since 2001 and has had problem-free administration. "We received great training on the product and have only made inquiries on taking advantage of its functionality," Bauer said. In terms of cost savings, Bauer has saved thousands of dollars that he would have spent on the purchase, replacement and energy consumption of at least 40 monitors. "Paragon also minimized the need for extra staff, so members of the department could use their time more effectively," he added. "Paragon is a testament to the reliability and scalability of a KVM solution. What impressed me most was the ability to deploy a technology that can be expanded in the future without tearing down the current infrastructure."

The Future

The next big technology undertaking for Bauer is The Hill School Open School Project. "We want to give back to the education community and share our advanced placement (AP) curriculum materials with schools around the country, especially in underprivileged school districts." Under this program, The Hill School is open sourcing its AP e-learning content. "Paragon will play an important role in this program to ensure our servers and network devices can handle the workload," said Bauer. "For us, it's not about technology but really about the kids and teachers spending time everyday with the future."

In the future, Bauer is excited about the prospect of accessing his servers and network devices remotely, to make it even easier for his IT staff to access the KVM switches. "As my needs grow, I know that I can call Raritan and I will not be in a technological cul-de-sac," he concluded.

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