

From SneakerNet to Integrated IT Systems Management.

Kaseya helps Monterey County in California provide consistent availability of distributed systems to 70,000 students spread out in a diverse region.

The inspiration for John Steinbeck's depression-era novel *Grapes of Wrath*, Monterey County in California is no stranger to diversity. Million-dollar mansions line the coast around Carmel and Pebble Beach while agriculture rules the county's rural inland regions. Salinas, the county seat, is home to 150,000 people, many of which are minorities and immigrants.

While diversity is typically a good thing disparities can bubble up—especially when it comes to education funding and opportunities. New innovative educational tools such as e-learning software and hardware have the power to engage students with a more stimulating curriculum that can get them excited about learning. Unfortunately, with differences in local funding, a reduction in state spending and gaps in high-speed broadband access in rural areas, not all students get the same opportunities.

That's where the county steps in.

Established more than 150 years ago by California's constitution, Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) strives to bridge the opportunity gap among the county's students, including equal access to technology. According to Scott Sexsmith, executive director of technology and information services for MCOE, systems management is a big part of that commitment to leveling the playing field. Reliable access to local desktops, infrastructure and the Internet is critical to supporting progressive education. The problem is maintaining these distributed systems spread out in 24 school districts across the nearly 4,000 square-mile county.

"Unfortunately, we were the classic example of SneakerNet," Sexsmith said. "We were literally driving around the county supporting local IT organizations that were strapped for resources and budget. We were inefficient. We were decentralized. We were spread too thin. We knew we needed to be smarter if we wanted to truly provide consistent access to technology for students. And that started with finding a new IT systems management strategy that would streamline basic maintenance."

Finding the Right Solution for Unique Needs

Alex Zheng, a network administrator for MCOE, set out to find a new help desk solution that the organization could use to remotely maintain distributed systems, identifying LANDesk, EMC, Dell and Symantec as potential vendors. In addition to being affordable, the solution needed to be able to support the county's large proportion of Macintosh computers and systems that sit behind third-party firewalls (as a county office, MCOE supports local IT organizations that each have their own security policies and protections). Two-thirds of the way through the process, Zheng was introduced to Kaseya, a remote and automated IT systems management solution.

"Right away, I knew that Kaseya was a better fit than LANDesk, EMC, Dell or Symantec and better matched our needs," Zheng said. "Not only was it agent-based, mitigating the firewall issue, it also supported Macs and was at a price point we felt comfortable with."

However, Sexsmith was more impressed with the integration capabilities that Kaseya provides IT organizations and the potential the solution gave MCOE to centralize IT systems management county-wide. Seemingly disparate IT services and functions such as monitoring, patch management, backups, security and auditing could be integrated through the Kaseya service



Kaseya Customer

Monterey County Office of Education
Salinas, California
www.monterey.k12.ca.us

Industry

Education

Business Challenge

- Provide consistent availability of local computers, e-learning software and the Internet for the county's 70,000 students
- Enhance IT services and support in the face of shrinking budgets and staffing
- Reliably and efficiently manage 700 systems distributed across 24 school districts in the 4,000 square-mile county
- Keep track of distributed IT equipment, systems and software licenses

Solution

- Kaseya IT Automation Framework



desk without additional configuration, giving technicians access to all the management and inventory data they would need to quickly troubleshoot and solve issues and then prevent them from occurring again through proactive maintenance.

Kaseya Eliminates a Reliance on SneakerNet

With Kaseya's centralized Web-based management dashboard, MCOE now has the ability to remotely maintain its more than 700 distributed systems spread throughout the county's 24 school districts. MCOE's systems administrators and help desk technicians have complete access into and control over the distributed systems from their office in Salinas without having to drive across the county or knock users off their computers. Better yet, tasks from conducting an inventory audit (required by many local governments, insurers and federal grants) to software deployment are now integrated, streamlining operations and making IT more efficient.

According to Sexsmith, the software licensing component in Kaseya is especially compelling. Not long ago, one of the school districts in the county was sued by a software vendor for unauthorized use of its software. It's not that the school district intentionally stole licenses; it simply didn't know what was out on the network and how users were accessing the software.

"Kaseya changes all that," Sexsmith declared. "We now have visibility into all systems on the network, including what is installed on each machine and how they are being used." Auditing the system through Kaseya is a snap. Sexsmith simply has to run a report, and a complete inventory list is pulled from a constantly-updated central repository that includes all the relevant serial number, warranty, licensing and usage information.

Kaseya Provides Visibility into Distributed Systems

Better visibility and control into remote systems allows MCOE to provide better service to the county's school districts. Students now have reliable access to computers, software and the Internet in the classroom—regardless of the school they attend or the financial backing of local property taxes. MCOE is able to close this gap efficiently by streamlining IT services and support and by consolidating proactive systems management on a single, consolidated dashboard.

As a result, all Monterey County students will have the same opportunities as their peers the next town over, and the county's school districts can start to improve test scores and close the education gap.

In the future, MCOE will eventually leverage other features and functionality in the Kaseya IT Automation Framework including patch management and monitoring—and everything will be routed through the centralized Kaseya service desk. Administrators and technicians will have all the tools and management data they need to provide efficient, yet powerful IT services and support to the county's schools from a single Web-based platform.

"We really like the direction Kaseya is going and the commitment the company has made toward solving common problems for K-12 school districts," Sexsmith said. "We see Kaseya as more of a partner than a vendor and look forward to working with them to continue to expand the availability of innovative teaching tools to all students regardless of economic or social standing."

It's a sentiment that Steinbeck, the working class hero, would be proud of.

About Kaseya

Kaseya is the leading global provider of IT Systems Management software. Kaseya solutions empower virtually everyone — from individual consumers to large corporations and IT service providers — to proactively monitor, manage and control IT assets remotely, easily and efficiently from one integrated Web-based platform.

For a free 30 day trial visit www.kaseya.com/download

Contact Kaseya: www.kaseya.com | sales@kaseya.com

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Scott Sexsmith

Executive Director of Technology and Information Services, MCOE

Key Benefits

- Students have consistent access to systems, software and the Internet regardless of the school they attend
- Systems are managed remotely from a central management console that also integrates disparate IT services
- Visibility into distributed systems streamlines auditing and reduces time to resolution by arming administrators with the tools and information they need.
- New power management strategy saves the county hundreds of dollars each month off its electricity bills.

