

Eanes Independent School District



“VMware View extends the life of the technology we already have so that our students aren’t negatively impacted by the ups and downs of the economy and educational budget cycles.”

– Carl Hooker
Virtualization Coordinator
Eanes Independent School District

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Challenge

Extend life of hardware within school district due to fluctuating education budget

Solution

VMware® View™ provides a platform for desktop virtualization that helps school districts reduce costs of a desktop environment

Results

- Extend desktop life cycle an extra one to two years, helping to delay hardware refresh expenses.
- Manage desktop environment more effectively without having to hire additional IT personnel.
- Increase performance of desktop applications, providing a superior educational experience for students and teachers alike.
- Established operating test environment to prove viability of desktop solution.

VMWARE AT WORK

VMware Infrastructure 3.5 Enterprise, featuring:

- ESX3.5
 - vCenterServer2.5
 - VMotion
 - DistributedResourceScheduler(DRS)
 - HighAvailability(HA)
 - SiteRecoveryManager(SRM)
- vSphere Enterprise, featuring:
- vSphere
 - vCenterServer4.0
 - vConverter

Eanes Independent School District Makes Exemplary Use Of VMware View, Reducing Costs Of Their Desktop Environment

Eanes Independent School District (Eanes ISD) is a school district in West Lake Hills, Texas, which is part of the Austin metropolitan area.

The district enrolls approximately 7,400 students, distributed among nine schools. All nine schools are rated exemplary—the highest designation possible—in the state of Texas accountability ratings, marking the second consecutive year they have achieved this feat.

At Eanes ISD, excellence extends beyond the classroom to the IT department, which strives to use technology as effectively as possible to support the goals of the district. “Like many school districts, we’re affected by budget shortfalls and cuts in education funding,” says Carl Hooker, virtualization coordinator at Eanes ISD. “When it comes to IT assets like our desktops, we need to extend their life so that teachers and students don’t have to do without access to Microsoft Office, Internet Explorer and other applications that they’ve come to depend upon.”

This goal led the district to explore desktop virtualization as a cost-saving strategy. “Normally, we refresh our desktops every five years, but desktop virtualization would enable us to extend the refresh cycle by a couple of years, giving us six or seven years of use out of our workstations,” says Hooker.

Eanes ISD evaluated several different offerings before selecting VMware® View™, the industry’s first purpose-built solution for delivering desktops as a managed service. “We experimented with various models and test cases, and we recognized that VMware View had the functionality to provide the best desktop experience for our end users,” says Hooker.

Developing Best Practices with VMware Professional Services

For Eanes ISD, the support and knowledge-sharing that the VMware Professional Services team provided was almost as important as the solution itself.

“The VMware team came in and did a ‘health check’ on our entire network infrastructure to make sure it was ready to handle the latest version of VMware View,” says Hooker. “To have them come in, analyze the environment and then give us step-by-step documentation on how to improve it saved us months of time. I never would have come up with all of the optimizations and best practices that they detailed.”

Virtualized Desktops Boost Performance, Streamline Management

Working on the recommendation of the VMware Professional Services team, Eanes ISD began a phased rollout of VMware View, starting with Cedar Creek Elementary School, one of the district’s nine schools. “We started by virtualizing 20 ‘general use’ classroom

VMWARE AT WORK

VMware View 4, featuring

- VMware View Composer
- VMware View Manager
- VMware vSphere™ for Desktops (includes VMware ESX® Server and VMware vCenter™ Server)

VMware Professional Services Assessment, Plan and Design Services

- VMware Health Check
- VMware View 4 upgrade
- VMware vSphere 4 upgrade planning and deployment
- Onsite VMware consultant

DEPLOYMENT ENVIRONMENT

- Datacenter hardware: Dell M610 blades with EqualLogic PS6000E iSCSI SAN storage array
- Client access devices: Dell GX620, Dell GX280, Dell GX270 and Dell Optiplex 745 and 755
- Guest operating systems: Windows XP
- Virtualized applications: Microsoft Office suite, Internet Explorer, Google Earth, ComicLife, Inspiration 8, Notebook 10 and more than 50 other educational and productivity applications

“When budget is tight, you don’t hire additional bodies. You find a way to work smarter. For our school district that meant deploying VMware View.”

— Carl Hooker
Virtualization Coordinator
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machines and 16 ‘heavy usage’ machines in the library that had significant streaming media and Internet use—and we just kept going from there,” says Hooker.

Virtualizing the desktops had an immediate impact. “We achieved a huge boost in performance on our applications,” says Hooker. “Logins that used to take a minute or more were completed in a matter of seconds. So not only was VMware View helping us extend the life of our hardware, it was helping it run much faster, which lets the teachers and students be more productive.”

Application delivery has also received a boost. “With VMware View delivering PC-over-IP (PCoIP) support, users notice a significant improvement in graphics rendering with some of the applications that traditionally would not have worked well in a virtualized desktop environment. Now we are looking forward to being able to deliver video streaming to a broader audience soon.”

Additionally, the ability to centrally manage the virtual desktops makes it easier for Eanes ISD to make better use of its IT personnel. “We have nine campuses spread out over a fairly wide area,” says Hooker. “It takes a lot of time and money to send people out to the actual physical workstations to do upgrades or updates. With VMware View, everything is centralized, and we can make changes to desktops in a matter of minutes. That helps us make much more efficient use of our people and reduce work-order time and transportation costs for the district.”

Future Plans

Based on its initial success using VMware View, Eanes ISD is seeking to further its usage of desktop virtualization throughout the school district.

“Later this year, we’d like to provide the high school students with virtual desktops on their personal laptops,” says Hooker. “This means they’ll be able to pull up a virtual desktop client on their laptop when they’re at home and use all the software that they have access to here in the school. It’s an exciting new direction that we’re heading in, and it will provide the students with increased flexibility and convenience.”

VMware View also gives the district an opportunity to evaluate different types of desktops on the same machine, which is especially helpful for training and staff development.

“With Windows 7 on the horizon in our district, we’d also like to use virtualized desktops as a way for staff and students to test this new operating system without having to leave the friendly confines of their XP environment,” Hooker states. “Also, with online high-stakes testing, it will become necessary to change an entire lab desktop overnight to a more restrictive ‘test desktop.’ VMware View allows us that flexibility without the headache over long hours spent after school reimaging each machine.”

