



Dartmouth College

A Degree in Endpoint Security and Management

Founded in 1769, Dartmouth College is a member of the prestigious Ivy League. Drawing faculty from around the world, Dartmouth enrolls about 4,300 undergraduates and 1,200 graduate students. In addition to its 16 graduate programs in the arts and sciences, it is home to the nation's fourth oldest medical school, the nation's first professional school of engineering, and the first graduate school of management in the world. Dartmouth's high-speed network connects all dormitory rooms, administrative offices, and academic buildings on campus and off campus. All Dartmouth undergraduates own a PC or laptop computer, contributing to the more than 9,000 PCs used across the campus by its students, faculty, and administrative staff. To ensure that all of these computers stay secure and productive, the college enrolls proactive endpoint security management provided by LANDesk® Security Suite and comprehensive desktop management inherent to LANDesk® Management Suite.

Business Needs

- Better secure and manage all of the endpoint devices spread throughout the college campus.

Solution

- LANDesk® Management Suite
- LANDesk® Security Suite

Business Benefits

- Discovered and eliminated security vulnerabilities and significantly minimized future risks on its client machines.
- Created and enforced a standard environment for its client computers.
- Facilitated the rapid deployment of OS images and applications to its more than 1,300 administrative computers.
- Decreased the time it takes to close helpdesk calls and improved overall end user satisfaction.

Creating a Standard

One of the main strategies that Dartmouth has employed to ensure the secure and available nature of the endpoint devices used at the college is the creation of its standards program. Every year Dartmouth sells about 900 new computers to incoming freshman, each imaged with a standard OS build, a basic set of applications, and LANDesk® Security Suite. In addition to this basic level of standardization, faculty and staff may opt into a more in-depth standards program that provides the desktop management and remote support benefits provided by LANDesk® Management Suite.

“By standardizing our environment using LANDesk, we’ve been able to keep out security vulnerabilities and attacks,” says Timothy Chiacchira, enterprise administrator at Dartmouth College. “It’s enabled us to discover hackers, eliminate vulnerabilities, and minimize future risks. I can’t say what the exact return on investment for LANDesk has been, except that it’s priceless.”

Keeping Endpoints Secure

Patch management plays a critical role in Dartmouth's vulnerability management efforts. In a study conducted by IDC, the analyst firm points out that patch management and remediation is essential in a loosely structured IT environment such as Dartmouth College. “Using the LANDesk® Security Suite patch management tools, the college can automatically identify both OS and application patch needs, establish patch vulnerability correlations, build custom patch packages, and download and prioritize patches for distribution. These functions are accomplished with LANDesk's targeted multicast delivery protocol and peer-to-peer download to increase the delivery rate.”¹

In the same report IDC also stated, “For Dartmouth, LANDesk Security Suite integrated solutions have provided in-depth defense within the network. The patch management features facilitated greater security with patch management, and the software enables changes in the registries that would have been hugely time-consuming if performed manually. The product helps eliminate the manual patching process when a new malicious code attack occurs, and in the recent slew of computer worms, the Dartmouth College IT network experienced no downtime.”

Another critical element to Dartmouth's vulnerability management plan is the blocking and removal of malicious and disruptive applications such as spyware and pop-ups. IDC refers to these as a veritable plague. "Pop-up ads appear on a user's computer screen, and the user often cannot continue working until he or she closes the window. If the user inadvertently clicks on the inside of the pop-up window, spyware may be installed without the user's meaningful consent. The fact that spyware can gather information about employees or organizations without their knowledge is causing enterprise IT security departments to take notice." IDC adds, "What concerns corporate security departments the most is that spyware can also be used to monitor keystrokes, scan files, install additional spyware, reconfigure Web browsers, and snoop email and other applications. It can also cripple computers, making them almost impossible to use."

"LANDesk® Security Suite enables us to block and remove spyware, adware, and other malware," says Chiacchira. "One of the most powerful aspects of LANDesk Security Suite is its ability to not only block and remove malicious and disruptive applications, but to prevent them from being inadvertently or intentionally installed on any of our machines."

Perhaps one of the most powerful aspects of the LANDesk solution is the ability it gives Dartmouth to manage all of its endpoint security and management efforts from a single, centralized console, including the management of antivirus definition updates. "I don't want to badmouth antivirus vendors, but we prefer the LANDesk console for managing both our antivirus and patch deployment," Chiacchira states. "It lets us keep the virus definitions up-to-date on all of our boxes, as well as enforce those machines to get all of their updates. We can track that and all of our other endpoint security needs from the LANDesk console."

Managing the Endpoints

When it comes to day-to-day desktop management needs, Dartmouth takes advantage of LANDesk® Management Suite to ensure that the more than 1,300 computers used by its administrative staff are properly cared for. "We can rapidly deploy applications to our administrative clients using LANDesk's targeted multicasting," says Chiacchira. "The peer-to-peer bandwidth technology not only allows us to deploy applications fast, but it does it without creating data saturation problems at our routers. As a result, we end up with a much higher success rate."

The remote control capabilities provided by LANDesk Management Suite also simplify and expedite the college's help desk efforts. "It allows us to solve problems much faster and with a lot less frustration at the end-user level," says Chiacchira. "Without it, we'd still be working on calls from last month." Chiacchira also appreciates the little extras that LANDesk provides in its remote control offering that some solutions don't provide, such as bandwidth throttling, screen draw, and file transfers.

As a result of its successful experience using LANDesk® Security Suite and LANDesk Management Suite, Dartmouth has truly come to appreciate the solutions' superior ability, scalability, flexibility, scope and ease of use in securing and managing endpoints. In affirmation of this, Chiacchira says, "I have looked at a lot of different products, and LANDesk is by far the best solution currently available on the market."

References

1 IDC - "Dartmouth College Relies on LANDesk Software for Patch Management, Spyware Removal, and Remediation in Secure Campus Network Environment," by Christian A. Christiansen, Sally Hudson, and Brian E. Burke, October 2005.



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Enterprise Administrator
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