POWER DOWN: SAVE BIG

Farmington Schools use Dell Client Manager from Altiris, realizing approximately six-figure annual power savings.

CUSTOMER PROFILE
COUNTRY: United States
INDUSTRY: Education
FOUNDED: 1913
NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 6,400
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 750
WEB ADDRESS: www.farmington.k12.mn.us

CHALLENGE
Farmington Area Schools wanted to centralize management of school endpoints and minimize power consumption by centrally powering them up and down as needed.

SOLUTION
The district deployed Dell™ Client Manager from Altiris, a plug-in for the Dell Management Console, for centralized endpoint management.

BENEFITS
• Faster deployment than expected from Altiris partner ITS
• Approximately $105,000 savings in annual power costs
• One image to manage for all Dell desktops and laptops
• Centralized BIOS updates
• Protection against student tampering from centralized BIOS password administration
• Time saved and reimbursement received through Dell Warranty Parts Direct
• System deployment in minutes instead of hours
Two new school buildings in the district just opened their doors, and test scores have been rising. For the first time in history in a key state test, Farmington students scored above the state average in reading in every grade.

Inside the schools, the use of computer technology is expanding, helping accelerate learning. About 2,400 desktops and laptops are spread among the eight buildings.

That led to something else that was going up and it wasn’t welcome: the school’s energy bill. The IT team sought a way to control it.

**STOP THAT POWER!**

“We really wanted power savings,” says Tracy Benson, technology support specialist at Farmington Area Schools. “Our teachers and students were getting reminders to turn off systems. But we have 30 labs and 10 libraries.

They hold 1,240 computer systems and no one was in charge of shutting all those systems down. The systems typically ran all night and weekends. If we set them to sleep, we couldn’t access them from remote when we needed to. We wanted to be able to turn them off when they weren’t in use—and on again when we needed to work on them.”

The key was gaining the ability to manage endpoints remotely—including being able to power them up and down from afar.

**AUTOMATION IS LIBERATION**

At a prior job, Benson had used Altiris Notification Server software from Symantec, a Dell partner. Altiris Notification Server enables administrators to move from the role of performing tasks to the role of defining policies that automate those tasks. She recommended that it be evaluated.

At Farmington Area Public Schools, some key numbers are on the rise. Thirty miles south of Minneapolis, Minnesota, there are eight Farmington schools and they’re home to 6,400 students in grades K-12. Enrollment is going up and is projected to reach 8,000 over the next 10 years.

**“DELL CLIENT MANAGER FROM ALTIRIS CENTRALLY AND AUTOMATICALLY TURNS OFF SYSTEMS WHEN THEY’RE NOT NEEDED. THIS REDUCES OUR POWER COSTS BY $85 PER UNIT PER YEAR. THAT’S A TOTAL ANNUAL SAVINGS OF AROUND $105,000.”**

Tracy Benson, technology support specialist, Farmington Area Public Schools

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**HOW IT WORKS**

**SERVICES**
- Dell™ Warranty Parts Direct

**HARDWARE**
- Dell OptiPlex™ 760, 755, 745 desktops
- Dell Latitude™ E6400, D630, D620, D610 laptops

**SOFTWARE**
- Altiris Deployment Solution
- Dell Client Manager from Altiris
- Dell Management Console
The latest version of Notification Server came with power management options and was available as Dell Client Manager from Altiris.

The school used mostly Dell OptiPlex desktops and Dell Latitude laptops. Says Benson: “We can set up Dell Client Manager from Altiris to power down our endpoints as an automated task on a given schedule, and it turns out that it manages both Dell and non-Dell PCs. This surprised me and is a great advantage.”

The school received solution design and deployment help from ITS, a firm that Symantec named Platinum Partner of the Year for its expertise with Altiris. Says Benson: “ITS did a great job showing us how to set up our solution and how to use it. It was up and running faster than expected. I was very impressed. If we had any kind of issue, it took ITS about five minutes to solve it.”

SAVING APPROXIMATELY $105,000 A YEAR
Now the Farmington IT team can have its systems in labs and libraries shut down automatically when appropriate. The task is easily modified: If systems are needed after-hours, they can be remotely powered up or down on demand.

“Dell Client Manager from Altiris centrally and automatically turns off systems when they’re not needed,” says Benson. “This reduces our power costs by $85 per unit per year. With 1,240 devices, that’s a total annual savings of around $105,000.”

DEPLOY IN MINUTES NOT HOURS
Farmington is also a longtime user of Altiris Deployment Solution from Symantec. “I handle image creation using Altiris,” Benson says. “We have a single hardware image and we can deploy it to a system in minutes, compared to hours it would take to provision a system with traditional methods.”

The solution also saves additional time. “We like Dell systems because we can deploy a single image across Dell desktop and laptop product lines, and with many other vendors that’s not possible,” Benson adds.

A further benefit of the Altiris Deployment Solution is that it is distributed to key staff members at Farmington schools who are a resource for helping teachers. “Some staff members work with teachers remotely, and it’s hard to have teachers tell them about an issue over the phone,” Benson explains. “With Altiris, they can access the teacher’s desktop from afar, see what the teacher is talking about, and give them help.”

BLOCKING STUDENT MISCHIEF
The IT team uses Dell Client Manager to update system BIOS, and centrally administer BIOS passwords. As a result, system configuration can be protected against student meddling.

“Dell Client Manager from Altiris extends Altiris capabilities so that we can manage Dell systems at the hardware level,” Benson explains. “We can update BIOS centrally. We can set the BIOS boot order priorities and set a BIOS password and have that pushed out to all Dell systems. If a student tries to tamper with the BIOS, the system resets to the right settings.”
The school had BIOS passwords before but applied them inconsistently, and sometimes a single building would end up with multiple passwords. “It wasn’t practical to administer this kind of protection before,” Benson says.

**KNOWLEDGE IS MONEY**

At Farmington Public Schools, some key performance numbers are on the rise. But as part of the effort to make the world more sustainable, the school district has made sure that PC power consumption in its labs and libraries isn’t one of them.