

ABOUT EMTEC®

Emtec is the right size provider of technology-empowered business solutions for world-class organizations. Our local offices, highly-skilled associates, and global delivery capabilities ensure the accessibility and scale to align your technology solutions with your business needs. Our collective focus is to continue to build clients for life: long-term enterprise relationships that deliver rapid, meaningful, and lasting business value.

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Emtec delivers comprehensive lifecycle Infrastructure Services – from requirements analysis, selection, planning, design, procurement and deployment, and technical support, to ongoing service management and outsourced managed services. From the desktop to the data center, our services include not only the procurement of hardware, but providing you with the tools and ability to efficiently provide support, security and effective use of internet computing assets.

- ITSM
- Data Center
- Business Application Infrastructure
- End User Computing
- Platforms

FIRM PROFILE

Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) is located in Jacksonville, Florida and is the 19th-largest school district in the U.S. Serving over 125,000 students, it is comprised of 165 schools and alternative learning centers.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

As part of a massive, ongoing technology refresh project, the district enlisted Emtec to replace or upgrade 35,000 desktops in all of the district's 19 high schools and 22 of the 29 middle schools during the summer break.

Emtec has been a key IT partner for the district for the past five years, and was involved in technology refreshes at more than 50 DCPS school buildings during that time. This was different as the sheer scope and compressed time frame made it a substantially more challenging project. But John Morrison, Executive Director of IT Operations for the school district, knew Emtec was more than up to the task.

Emtec helped Duval County Public Schools undertake a technology refresh. While every student likes to have brand new supplies on the first day of school, a good portion of the students in the Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) were welcomed with something else new when they returned for classes - brand new desktop computers.

"The desktop refresh project is yet another example of the professional service Emtec provides on DCPS projects," said Morrison. "Our original schedule was moved forward several weeks from the original aggressive projections due to efficiencies of project management and quality control processes."

This technology refresh is all part of a larger district initiative called "DCPS Schools of the Future," which is intended to maximize student achievement and student engagement. The district had decided that the hard and soft

costs of aging equipment outweighs the cost of replacement.

Lack of support for older operating systems was a compelling reason to upgrade PCs. Many of the district's PCs were running Windows 98, which was no longer supported by Microsoft. Without the ability to be supported with patches and upgrades, those machines were vulnerable to security risks.

DCPS needed to get the Windows 98 machines off of their network and upgrade a great deal of other machines that came with Windows XP but had been downgraded to Windows 2000. With the ability to upgrade these systems back to XP at no charge, the time was right to move everything to XP in order to get all the machines on one operating system and one platform.

With Windows XP, Microsoft began a process of continuous software maintenance. Security problems were addressed as soon as they were discovered, and patches distributed to IT managers and end-users as quickly as possible. This process made the operating system much more secure.

THE SOLUTION

The project wasn't just a matter of upgrading the OS on an old machine. XP simply won't run well on older systems. It requires hardware with faster processors, faster system buses and higher-performance memory to take advantage of the latest applications and productivity-enhancing features.

“Emtec is a valued partner with DCPS for providing desktop and printer deployments and service. As with so many projects, the Emtec staff provides timely and professional support for all DCPS initiatives. I would, without reservation, recommend Emtec for any technology deployment!”

John Morrison
DCPS Director of IT Operations

Emtec’s team worked closely with the school district’s IT team to identify which machines could be upgraded and which would need to be replaced.

Logistics and project management were the keys to completing these initial phases of the project during the summer break, when there would be no disruption to classes or teachers’ planning schedules. Emtec went to work immediately after Memorial Day weekend with a pilot project at one of the high schools.

More than 500 Lenovo desktops were shipped to a school district warehouse, where the Emtec team imaged and configured them with DCPS’s valid software, palletized and asset tagged everything, transported them to the school building and installed them. All the old gear was removed at that time and shipped back to the warehouse, where those machines will either be repurposed or retired. The pilot project was completed in less than a week. Impressed with Emtec’s thorough and efficient performance in this “proof of concept” installation, the school district gave the green light to commence the full-scale refresh project at additional sites.

TECHNOLOGY

Duval County Public Schools recognized that technology played a critical role in keeping students engaged and prepared for a fiercely competitive global marketplace. Yet, the district made a key distinction: DCPS leadership believed instructional need must drive technology solutions, rather than employing technology for technology’s sake.

As such, the district had some very specific goals for the technology refresh project. The gear had to support four key diagnostic and intervention software solutions:

- **NWEA** – Software run on a local server in a lab setting. It provides diagnostic tests that provide a quick reference for gauging student readiness for reading and mathematical instruction. Teachers can target instruction without spending hours conducting one-on-one testing.
- **Fast ForWord** – Also run on a local server in a lab setting, this is neuroscience-based reading intervention software. The district will use these interventions to accelerate learning for struggling students, English-language learners and students preparing for college entrance exams.
- **Read 180** – A reading intervention program. As its name suggests, it is meant to get students who have a hard time reading and comprehending stories to make a turnaround and improve those skills. The program uses a variety of audio, video and written assignments to that end.
- **Compass/Odyssey** – A Web-based solution for grade/ course recovery, credit enhancement and differentiated instruction. Targeted for middle and high school students who may have unconventional schedules, it can be used in a lab setting, in classrooms, at home or in any wireless hotspot.

RESULTS

Nearly 20,000 PCs had been upgraded from Windows 2000 to XP, with another 15,000 replaced with new Lenovo desktops. Emtec prepared all the systems that were retired for disposal by DCPS. In addition, DCPS also enlisted Emtec’s support in installing 49 Apple servers, backup power, KVM switches and keyboard/monitor systems. This gear is designed to support several important educational assessment programs the district is undertaking.