

Business School Graduates to Unified IT Asset Management and Automated Image Deployment Solution

The school eliminated manual procedures for asset management with the KACE Systems Management Appliance (SMA) and it automated imaging with the KACE Systems Deployment Appliance (SDA).

Quest

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Company Business School
Industry Education
Country United Kingdom
Employees 600

BUSINESS NEED

Amid rapid growth at the business school, the IT team had taken on more functions and responsibilities without the chance to implement tools to integrate and control them.

SOLUTION

By streamlining asset management, software license management and patch management in the SMA, the IT team can now see the status of all its endpoints at a glance. The team has also moved from labor-intensive, manual imaging of machines to automated image deployment. Users are happier and IT can focus on professional development and improving services to the school.

BENEFITS

- Ensured smoother transition as the business school continues to grow
- Cut the time to image dozens of machines from four days to a matter of hours
- Delivered all-in-one, automated solution for urgent IT needs

SOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

- Unified endpoint management
- Software distribution and maintenance
- System imaging and deployment



“It used to take us about four days to image 50 machines manually. Now it's a doddle. We can image that many machines in a day. That is clearly a benefit to everyone.”

IT Director, Business School

When it takes your team almost four days to image 50 computers and your software license tracking is all manual, you're ready to automate your image deployment and asset management.

As this business school's executive education and premium courses have brought about success and rapid growth, the IT team has begun to feel increased pressure to improve processes for greater efficiency.

It was time to invest in automated tools for imaging, security, asset management and patching to put the team back in control of IT.

BREAKING OUT OF THE "CYCLE OF DOOM"

The school's small IT team managed to keep up with the early growth by using a software product for imaging computers. Upon receiving a batch of new PCs, the team would unpack them, image them, then manually install patches and applications. Or, if a user complained of a virus, a technician would go to the user's office, deal with the virus and patch the machine. Even with scripting, it was a labor-intensive, time-consuming process that still left the team with no easy way to keep all of the school's machines updated.

"No one was really happy," says the IT director at the school. "My team was unhappy because they were fire-fighting all the time instead of developing improved systems. Users were unhappy because they perceived that their machines were broken so often. And I was unhappy because we didn't have the resources to search for really good software. We needed to break out of that 'cycle of doom.'"

In time, the IT team evaluated and licensed the KACE Systems Management Appliance (SMA) for endpoint management and the KACE Systems Deployment Appliance (SDA) for enterprise OS software deployment. Knowing that it would be difficult to embrace endpoint management and introduce automation rapidly, they availed themselves of needed help from the Professional Services group at Quest®.

IMAGING GOES FROM LABOR-INTENSIVE TO A DODDLE

One of the deployment problems they had faced was that their go-to imaging software was acquired by an enterprise software vendor. When it was then folded into a larger management suite, the product became more difficult to use instead of easier.

"What I wanted to do," says the IT director, "was to take a new machine out of the box, plug it into the network and have the system do as much as possible for us. That way, getting the user up and running would require minimal intervention from IT. In a nutshell, that's what the KACE SDA does for us. Now we use the KACE SDA to image every machine, whether it's because of a hardware upgrade or a malware infection or a refresh. It's brilliant for that."

At one time, the school needed some of its machines to dual-boot Windows and Linux, so it engaged a Quest channel partner to write scripts to enable the KACE SDA to deploy both operating systems to a PC. Another requirement is to re-image all of the PCs in the school every other summer. IT took advantage of the KACE SDA and a summer break to perform a problem-free, school-wide Windows 10 upgrade from Windows 7.

"It used to take us about four days to image 50 machines manually," the IT director says. "Now it's a doddle. We can

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IT Director, Business School

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

VIRTUAL APPLIANCES

KACE Systems Management Appliance

KACE Systems Deployment Appliance

Professional services

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ELIMINATING QUESTIONS WITH A SINGLE LOOK AT THE KACE SMA DASHBOARD

The IT team had used an asset management system previously, but they greatly prefer the close integration between the KACE SMA and SDA. Besides enjoying a broad, deep view of their inventory across the network, they can patch machines, keep on top of machines that aren't checking in, make sure all of their PCs are secure and even see which computers are due for replacement.

“I think the fact that we can log in, go to the dashboard and see the status of our infrastructure at a glance is brilliant,” notes the IT director. “We couldn't do that before. It's great to have a reliable, low-impact agent that reports in and gives us a real-time view of each machine without draining it. Instead of trying to work out manually whether a machine is at the right patch level, or has the correct software installed, or has valid software licenses for compliance, we can take inventory of our machines just by looking at the KACE SMA. That's the thing that dreams are made of in IT, isn't it? Seeing in real time the status of your machines?”

“For example, I can easily see the waves in which we've purchased our desktop machines over the years. A few years ago, if you'd asked me how many Dell 7090s we had, I'd have had to send one of the guys around for a day to get the answer manually. But now, I just click on the graph and get the answer in a second or two. I know I need to purchase newer models for our staff and this overview helps me budget for the next year based on our replacement cycle. It simplifies the decision-making process.”

The IT team relies on the KACE SMA to show all the endpoints that are on a certain patch level so they can deal with them promptly. The SMA is also their

tool of choice for staying compliant in software licensing — where each application is running, which versions are in use — and not exceeding the permitted number of copies.

ALL-IN-ONE ASSET MANAGEMENT

Having used the KACE SMA and SDA for several years, the IT director is pleased with the way Quest continues improving the products. He is impressed by enhancements to the user interface and to overall performance and responsiveness.

He also enjoys feeling like a member of the community of KACE customers and applauds the opportunity at regular UserKon conferences to get his questions answered directly by the engineers who write the code.

“What you get with KACE is an all-in-one solution,” he says. “Now that we've got to grips with how much it can do for us, we see that it helps us manage our infrastructure far better than anything we had before. It saves us tons and tons of time, and therefore money. We're working more efficiently, and therefore we've got more budget for other projects. It just has a knock-on effect.”

“It's great to manage infrastructure in a way that gives you confidence that everything is as it should be, and you can see that in one report. The fact that you can go home at night and not worry about what has happened on the network gives you peace of mind that you just can't buy.”

ABOUT QUEST

Quest provides software solutions for the rapidly-changing world of enterprise IT. We help simplify the challenges caused by data explosion, cloud expansion, hybrid datacenters, security threats and regulatory requirements. Our portfolio includes solutions for database management, data protection, unified endpoint management, identity and access management and Microsoft platform management.

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