Business school streamlines help desk ticketing, device imaging, workflows and inventory

The McIntire School of Commerce at the University of Virginia uses KACE® by Quest® to streamline its IT services, software distribution, help desk and on-boarding workflows.

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UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA | McINTIRE SCHOOL of COMMERCE

Country: **USA**

Employees: **Approximately 300**

Industry: **Education**

Website: commerce.virginia.edu

"I'm going to assign a project to 400 students," says the Finance professor. **"By the way, they'll need access to this piece of software. Can you have it on the lab machines by Tuesday?"**

In the McIntire School of Commerce at the University of Virginia (Commerce School), the IT team often gets requests like that. McIntire is an undergraduate and graduate school with about 1,400 students and several hundred faculty and staff, and its IT team is responsible for managing school-provided endpoint devices.

"We've been using KACE for more than ten years," says Eric Rzeszut, director of IT product management at the Commerce School. "I know how heavily we use KACE and how heavily we're invested, and we're certainly getting our money's worth out of it."

About this case study

The school's IT team must ensure that its services (re-imaging, new machines, end of useful life) align smoothly with the needs of the academic community.

Solution

IT uses the KACE Systems Management Appliance for help desk ticketing, workflows and device inventory, and the KACE Systems Deployment Appliance for software distribution, scripting and patching.

Benefits

- Provided a comprehensive help desk solution, easily accessible to staff and student workers
- Enabled the school's users to work unhampered by endpoint management
- Allowed for workflows that trigger tickets to on-board/off-board faculty and staff and to initiate office moves
- Tracked building management items like room keys and after-hours access

Solutions at a glance

- Automated image deployment
- Software distribution and management

Service desk and inventory

The school's internal help desk depends heavily on the service desk feature of the KACE Systems Management Appliance (SMA), which sees dozens of tickets created and worked every day. Besides its value in operations and tracking, the service desk feature allows IT to report on and study ticket volume by categories like incident type.

"We love setting up workflows for recurring actions in the building," says Rzeszut, "like onboarding and off-boarding, and people changing offices. We have a specific workflow for door security requests in case, say, the school needs the building doors unlocked on Saturday because it's hosting an alumni event. The workflow triggers tickets to the people in Facilities and Security who need to be notified."

All of the Commerce School's PCs run a KACE agent that allows IT to manage endpoint inventory with the SMA. One workflow sends a notification to the help desk to dispatch a technician when a lab computer has been offline for 24 hours. Another sends warnings about endpoints running low on hard drive space. IT uses the SMA for warranty tracking, through regular reports that list endpoints in the final three months of their warranty coverage, when replacement is near. And the scripting feature in the SMA enables IT to install the software applications that professors request — usually with short notice.

Imaging and patching

With the KACE Systems Deployment Appliance (SDA), IT is able to take advantage of cycles in the academic year for image deployment and device replacement.

"Our deployment activities take place at specific times of the year," says Rzeszut. "We re-image our lab and classroom PCs in the summer, when most of the students are gone. And all of our faculty and staff are now on a replacement cycle in which half of them get new machines in December and the other half in July."

Thanks to the alignment between the IT cycle and the academic year, Rzeszut's team knows when it will be able to upgrade the SDA and build new images. They test things during the downtime so that, if something breaks, it doesn't affect students, faculty or staff.

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>
> *Eric Rzeszut, Director of IT Product Management, McIntire School of Commerce*

Unexpected value: Making the best use of student workers and tracking keys

Although the Commerce School never saw this coming, the service desk feature of the SMA has shown tremendous value in the evenings and on weekends. Student workers attend the help desk outside of normal business hours and the SMA enables them to use their time more efficiently.

"I must say that KACE, and specifically the SMA, is really good at making use of our student workers," says Rzeszut. "When we weren't using KACE service desk, what we got from the student workers were scribbles on Post-It Notes: 'Professor somebody came in and said there was some problem in a second-floor classroom.' We wasted a lot of time cleaning up the details they provided, so we started training student workers in the ticketing system. Now they all know how to create tickets, assign severity levels, choose a category, specify a location and enter the person's ID for follow-up. Whether it's student workers or our IT staff, it's helpful to force them into these boxes and make them think about the information we need to fix the problem."

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES
Software
• KACE Systems Deployment Appliance
• KACE Systems Management Appliance

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Because incidents change over time, IT has left the option of selecting "Other" for new types of problems. Every month the help desk manager reviews all the Other-categorized tickets and decides whether it's time to create new categories.

Electronic devices are not the only assets that the school tracks; IT also uses the SMA to track all door keys. In a big improvement over spreadsheets, the searchable database contains the key number, the door it opens and the person to whom it's assigned. Centralizing that information allows staff to quickly issue spare keys when somebody is locked out, and having it in the SMA makes it accessible to student workers as well.

About Quest

Quest creates software solutions that make the benefits of new technology real in an increasingly complex IT landscape. From database and systems management, to Active Directory and Office 365 management, and cyber security resilience, Quest helps customers solve their next IT challenge now. Quest Software. Where next meets now.

> ## The SDA is great for organizations like ours that want to image large numbers of devices uniformly over time. It's a specialized appliance and for us it's indispensable.

Eric Rzeszut, Director of IT Product Management, McIntire School of Commerce

Future uses for KACE

Rzeszut's next goal for KACE is to help the school's audio/visual group use the SMA to track its inventory of assets like projectors, switchers and Crestron products. The group needs a solution for asset management to get a better picture of the equipment it has and Rzeszut believes that KACE is well suited to that need.

"The SMA in particular is a comprehensive solution for IT management," he says. "We use it for ticketing, inventory, patching, scripting and asset tracking. And the SDA is great for organizations like ours that want to image large numbers of devices uniformly over time. It's a specialized appliance and for us it's indispensable."

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