



Education Office Gets Smart about Backup

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Brian Dake, Director of Information Technology,
Napa County Office of Education

Napa County Office of Education backs up all email boxes with Western Digital®'s WD Sentinel small office storage server; reduces storage costs and speeds up PC support with remote Web access.

The Napa County Office of Education (NCOE) provides financial services (budgeting, payroll, retirement accounting and grants review) to the five public school districts in Napa County, California. Included in these districts are 50 schools and 7 pre-schools. NCOE provides support for nearly 250 staff members and more than 3,700 students. The IT staff of just five people supports nearly 900 networked devices, including 714 student and staff PCs, 71 servers and dozens of printers, routers and switches—all on a very lean budget.“

In the education environment we never have enough money, so we have to work smarter, not just harder,” says Brian Dake, Director of Information Technology for the Napa County Office of Education.

In the case of backup, “smarter” meant finding a more cost-effective way to back up email boxes, which is essential to comply with regulatory requirements. The organization’s 25 most important e-mail users—the executive staff—used so much of its mail database storage (50 percent) that the county office did not have sufficient infrastructure capacity in place to back up the other 225 e-mail boxes. This presented a potential issue in the event of a request to reproduce email messages.



100 Percent Email Backup, Reduced Legal Liability

In October 2011, NCOE obtained a WD Sentinel DX4000 Small Office Storage Server, which provided 5.6 terabytes of centralized storage and secure remote access to files. Dake had the unit up and running in minutes. “I found WD Sentinel much easier to install, maintain and use than other workstation backup systems,” he says.

The NCOE now uses WD Sentinel to back up all the data and customized settings for its critical executive PCs. In addition, thanks to the vast amount of shared network storage available, the IT staff is now able to back up e-mail for the other 225 employees. “WD Sentinel gives us plenty of room to store tons of email at a very reasonable cost,” Dake says. “It also potentially saves the Napa County Office of Education millions of dollars in legal liability by enabling us to back up 100 percent of our email boxes.”

Faster Support with Remote Web Access

Dake’s staff is also excited about the Remote Web Access capabilities of WD Sentinel. Many of the school sites supported by the IT staff have their own network, and the NCOE cannot easily access those networks. When NCOE IT technicians traveled to a school to fix a broken PC, the problem was often different than what the user reported and required multiple trips back to the office to obtain the right parts or software.

With its seamless PC and server integration, WD Sentinel provides IT technicians with secure, direct or remote access to a PC on the network. This allows technicians to determine the root cause of any problems before visiting the site so they know exactly which software or equipment to bring while making a support visit. This speeds up problem resolution, allows IT staff to address after-hours issues from home rather than driving into the office and saves up to 16 hours a week in wasted travel time. “In addition to these benefits we are seeing increased efficiency

because we can support workstations at multiple sites simultaneously and the increased uptime enjoyed by users because their computers are repaired more quickly,” Dake says.

Working Smarter Saves Money

Before the NCOE discovered WD Sentinel, it was looking at buying another small SAN (storage area network), an \$8,000 expense. “WD Sentinel is much more affordable. Plus it provides more functionality than just raw storage, such as Remote Web Access to connected computers and their data. That saves even more money,” Dake says. “We’re looking at putting additional WD Sentinel servers at some of our school sites. This would give us instant access to the PCs at those sites, providing us with the ability to manage more with less.”



Blazingly Fast Backups

The combination of the Intel® Atom™ processor and the block-level deduplication technology in WD Sentinel translates into remarkably fast computer backups and PC reimaging times. “The deduplication technology of WD Sentinel really speeds up backups and cuts down on the amount of storage we have to buy,” Dake says.

NCOE is excited about the opportunities presented by WD Sentinel’s multimedia capabilities. Dake is exploring ways to implement photo, music and video streaming into future projects for NCOE and its staff.