

The San Miguel School creates foundation for success

Overview

■ **The Challenge**

Cost-effectively provide stable technology to support education at a small private school—and ensure ease of management for a nontechnical staff

■ **The Solution**

The San Miguel School quickly implemented the IBM® Lotus® Foundations™ Start software appliance for a uniform and reliable means to access files, create e-mail accounts, manage Internet usage and manage system backups

■ **Benefits**

- *With Lotus Foundations Start, automatic backups protect critical data with no expertise required*
- *Easy-to-use management tools let nontechnical staff oversee system information*
- *All-in-one package provides e-mail, VPN, office productivity software and more—at low cost*
- *Integrated firewall and Internet monitoring capabilities keep students away from inappropriate sites*

Administered by the Roman Catholic order of Brothers of the Christian Schools (De La Salle Christian Brothers), The San Miguel School of Camden, New Jersey (The San Miguel School) fulfills an important role: educating at-risk adolescent boys who typically need more personal attention than other schools can provide. “We’re here to provide a solid educational foundation so our students don’t fall between the cracks,” says President Brother Joseph Juliano. “But until recently, we didn’t have the technology in place to support our goals. Time spent trying to get our computers working is time we should be dedicating to our students.”

Dispersed IT systems get a failing grade

Because The San Miguel School’s technology had been acquired piecemeal over the years, the school used an unstable assortment of servers running different—and often incompatible—versions of the Microsoft® Windows® operating system. It was difficult to back up the systems, says Brother Joseph, because the school does not employ a dedicated IT staff member. “I was always afraid I’d push the wrong button and lose important data, such as grades, records and personnel files,” he says.

The inability to easily manage the school’s small IT infrastructure also put the boys’ education at risk. Classes at The San Miguel School use laptops as educational aids, and the school’s small computer room allows the students to type papers and go online for research. Yet the school had no systems to help students accomplish this work—or any way to ensure that student work was archived once it was complete.

IBM provides a crash course on system ease and reliability

While Brother Joseph and his colleagues knew that something needed to change, the costs for purchasing and maintaining a more reliable system seemed inaccessible—until an outside IT consultant recommended Lotus Foundations *Start* as the ideal solution. The Linux®-based software appliance includes everything a small organization needs to run its IT, from e-mail and collaboration tools to automated backup and security.

THE SAN MIGUEL SCHOOL
of
 Camden, New Jersey



Plus, minimal maintenance was attractive from both a time and cost perspective, Brother Joseph says. "Lotus Foundations *Start* gives us a way to enable our students and staff without excess support costs," says Brother Joseph. "And the time we've gained back by no longer wrestling with our old systems can be put toward supporting our students."

According to Brother Joseph, a single weekend was all the time required to test the new hardware, implement Lotus Foundations *Start* and transfer more than 30 GB of existing files to the new IBM system. Once installed, The San Miguel School immediately attained more stability, thanks to automatic backups and a user-friendly interface that walks nontechnical staff members through almost any problem that might arise.

Stable IT passes the test for more educational capabilities

Prior to Lotus Foundations *Start*, school staff used personal e-mail addresses to communicate with parents and each other, and a lack of a centralized address book made collaboration a challenge. With included IBM Lotus Notes® messaging, the school can provide its staff with e-mail addresses and a system-wide address book, easing communications both inside and outside school walls. The appliance also provides VPN access, allowing the staff to continue work offsite when developing classroom assignments and activities.

Included Lotus productivity software gives the school access to word processing, spreadsheet and presentation

applications at a much lower cost than similar products on the market. "Paying hundreds of dollars per user for office software isn't a possibility for us—Lotus gives us the applications our staff and students need at much lower cost," Brother Joseph says.

But most of all, says Brother Joseph, having a computer system that works reliably every day is essential for students at The San Miguel School. "Most of our students don't have computers at home," he says. "With Lotus Foundations *Start*, we're able to teach computer skills—and give students controlled access to the Internet with built-in safety features."

The San Miguel School graduates to new IT capabilities

Lotus Foundations *Start* has become an integral part of education at The San Miguel School, and Brother Joseph and his colleagues are now preparing to expand its use. "We plan to start using to use more of the capabilities included in the package," he says. "Soon we will use Lotus Notes to run calendars and build team rooms for our staff—while also developing a more extensive Web presence. These additional features will help us continue to remove the burden of managing technology so we can focus on educating at-risk young people."

For more information

For more information on IBM Lotus Foundations *Start*, please contact your IBM sales representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit www.lotusfoundations.com

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