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Case Study
Council Rock School District

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Matt Frederickson, IT Director, Council Rock School District

THE CUSTOMER

Council Rock School District
Industry: Education
Number of Employees: 1,400
Website: www.crsd.org

CHALLENGE

CRSD's existing storage solution was prone to failure and required a high degree of maintenance, which was a burden on the IT team. IT wanted to find a new approach to storage that would be stable and cost-effect.

APPROACH

The new solution consists of production storage provided by an ETERNUS DX440 S2 and offsite storage archiving by an ETERNUS DX90 S2, which now accounts for 60% of CRSD's total storage requirements.

The customer

The Council Rock School District (CRSD) is located in Bucks County, in south eastern Pennsylvania. It spends over $12,000 per secondary student per year, and operates two high schools, three middle schools, ten elementary schools, and an alternative high school. The district covers 72 square miles, and comprises five Bucks County municipalities. It educates 12,000 students and has approximately 956 teachers and supervisors, as well as clerical, custodial, maintenance and cafeteria employees who support the instructional program.

The challenge

CRSD's existing storage solution was inadequate, and required a high degree of maintenance. This was a burden on the IT team of ten people. IT wanted a more efficient storage solution that would be robust, reliable, and expandable.

"We had 13 different SANs communicating over the network but they were not performing effectively. When one unit failed, it led to the loss of 23 servers and caused severe disruption," explains Matt Frederickson, IT Director, Council Rock School District. "In addition, we were faced with limited disk space. People tend to think of storage as cheap and limitless, but as technology becomes more integrated into the education process, there is an increasing demand for space. We simply no longer could cope with demand."

CRSD called on their IT solution provider, **ASK TECHNOLOGIES, INC.** to assist them with the challenge of finding an appropriate campus wide storage solution that would be both resilient and cost effective. "ASK has been a strategic partner providing CRSD with network integration, security and wireless services as well as supplying infrastructure equipment to the district for the past 10 years. It made sense to lean on their expertise with this project," said Frederickson.

THE BENEFIT
• In the three years since the migration began, CRSD has not had a single instance of failure • An increase in performance of 40 percent has slashed the time it takes to back up servers from days to hours • Predictive failure detection identifies issues before they occur, enabling optimal reliability • Improved availability makes students and teachers more productive

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES
• Fujitsu Storage ETERNUS DX440 S2 • Fujitsu Storage ETERNUS DX90 S2

"It was not about selling a product; we wanted to be sure our long term customer was receiving a superior solution and the best treatment possible," said Stephen Pirolli, *ASK TECHNOLOGIES, INC.* As a result, ASK turned to Fujitsu, a worldwide proven leader in storage architecture and management software. "Fujitsu is a trusted ASK partner who we rely on to help us achieve our customer-centric goal of providing a true end-to-end storage solution," said Anthony Talotta, *ASK TECHNOLOGIES, INC.*

"Fujitsu was the only vendor who was straight forward and proactive. The ASK and Fujitsu team explained that I was looking at the problem from the wrong angle, and my criteria would not address the issues we had," adds Frederickson. "Other vendors were rigid and prescriptive but Fujitsu came in and spent hours discussing my needs and how teachers and students access the system. The result was an elegant solution that would solve our storage issues, now and in the future."

CRSD then invited all of the vendors to resubmit proposals based on the Fujitsu blueprint.

Fujitsu was the most cost effective and flexible solution while providing the greatest available disk space, making the decision a fairly simple one.

"Fujitsu really understood our business and architected a robust solution based on our needs, so naturally we chose them as our storage partner," said Frederickson.

The solution

Over the course of the summer vacation, Frederickson and his team began to migrate the systems over to the new storage platform. The new solution consists of production storage provided by an ETERNUS DX440 S2 and offsite storage archiving supported by an ETERNUS DX90 S2. Together they now host 60 percent of CRSD's total storage requirements; a figure that is set to rise as the migration continues next summer.

"The new system worked from the word 'go' which in my 25 years' experience in IT is something I have never seen before," continues Frederickson. "We have already migrated 40TB to the ETERNUS platform and in the three years since migration began, it has been totally rock solid. We've had no issues at all and that gives me tremendous peace of mind."

The solution provides storage for a range of systems including business applications for HR, Finance and Business Intelligence, the student information system and an education system where students store their own files. Performing the migration of these virtualized applications has been a surprisingly painless process.

"Fujitsu came in and set up the SANs, arrays and servers and we then migrated the systems in-house. We simply allocate space on the Fujitsu SAN and then transition the virtual machines across," says Frederickson. "The web-based GUI is incredibly intuitive and makes managing the storage straight-forward."

The benefit

The new system is not only incredibly reliable; it also outperforms the previous platform by 40 percent. This has led to a dramatic fall in the time it takes to back up servers.

"It used to take us days to back up certain servers and that is now down to a matter of hours – for example, our Exchange server holds 23TB and would take us four days to create a backup; now we can do it in a day," comments Frederickson. "That frees up my team's time to focus on more strategic objectives."

Students and teachers alike can now access files and applications from any location, safe in the knowledge they will be available around the clock. This makes everyone more productive and removes the frustration caused by the previous platform's unreliability.

"The best thing about the ETERNUS solution is that it simply doesn't go down. We can rely on it to deliver what we need when we need it," says Frederickson. "And with the predictive failure detection functionality, if there is an issue, I get an email in my inbox well in advance. For example, if it detects a disk spinning too slowly, I get an alert and a Fujitsu engineer comes in the next day to fix it. That's outstanding service and ensures optimal stability and performance."

Conclusion

CRSD will continue to migrate its storage as budget and timing dictates, and hopes to have completed the final transfer this summer.

In the meantime, Frederickson and his team are enjoying the stress-free operation of the new storage environment"We needed an adaptable and flexible solution within a limited budget and that is what Fujitsu supplied," concludes Frederickson. "The company went to the trouble of asking the right questions in order to design a platform that would address my specific needs, and that collaborative approach made Fujitsu stand out from the pack."

"Fujitsu's proactive and flexible approach has led to a storage platform that has exceeded expectations in every conceivable way."

About ASK

ASK TECHNOLOGIES, INC. is a national provider of IT hardware, software and professional services with proven experience and expertise in various technology areas, stretching across multiple vertical markets. With a specialization in multi-service network integration, ASK creates innovative and cost effective solutions to solve our clients' mission critical business needs.

About Fujitsu

FUJITSU is the leading Japanese information and communication technology (ICT) company offering a full range of technology products, solutions and services. Approximately 170,000 Fujitsu people support customers in more than 100 countries. We use our experience and the power of ICT to shape the future of society with our customers. For more information, please see www.fujitsu.com.

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