

De Montfort University Audio Visual Services team work smarter with net-runna Enterprise



“net-runna Enterprise helps us to fix PCs even quicker than before and that is exactly why we bought the product – we are thrilled by the huge difference net-runna is making within our organisation”. Dave Atterbury, Senior IT Systems Engineer at De Montfort University

Learn how net-runna Enterprise helps De Montfort University’s Audio Visual Services team further improve their service to academics and students, whilst reducing the support effort required by the Information Services and Systems (ISAS) team.

Introduction

De Montfort University is the latest in a series of educational institutions to adopt net-runna Enterprise as a key part of their ICT strategy. With links to many other universities and colleges worldwide DMU has an international reputation for preparing students for careers in the creative industries as well as for its innovation and research. DMU boasts approximately 20,500 students, 3,240 staff and an annual turnover in the region of £132.5 million.

The first phase in their net-runna Enterprise adoption involves the deployment of net-runna within the university’s Audio Visual (AV) Services unit. AV Services manage the loan of equipment such as laptops, monitors, projectors and projection screens to academics throughout the institution, servicing approximately 150 teaching areas across the university campus and video conferencing across the globe.

The History

The university central IT support organisation’s AV Services and User Support Teams (UST) have been collaborating in a bid to further improve services. The UST ISAS team is the group responsible for the building and configuring of the AV Services laptops. New machines are delivered with unnecessary applications installed – applications which need to be replaced by other programmes and settings in-line with the DMU service specification – however, this rebuild and configuration process can take upwards of a day to perform per machine.

To maintain this new configuration the laptops are “locked down” preventing any user changes or unlicensed software installation – thus, in theory, laptops are returned in the same working state that they are loaned out in.

The Problem

Whilst the 'lockdown' of machines has its advantages for the ISAS team, i.e. reduced effort and faster turnaround, it can impact on academics due to limited access rights as a result.

Another consideration with machine lockdown is that it does nothing to reduce the risk of laptop corruption or virus infection – infected machines would have to be returned to ISAS and rebuilt – easily 5 hours work per machine. Whilst laptops are being recovered they are out of circulation which could produce a strain on resources.

The Solution

The DMU UST wanted to configure the laptops to allow full access for their academic staff whilst being able to return machines to their original pre-loan state in the shortest possible time and so they turned to net-runna Enterprise.

The old way

David Atterbury, Senior IT Systems Engineer - User Support explains:

“We build machines up in the state that they are dispatched to us from our suppliers after which we remove anything that we don't need and re-install everything that we do in-line with our licensing inventory”

To build the laptops from scratch is a time consuming and laborious process mainly because of the sheer number of bespoke applications and utilities.

David continued...

“This process is time consuming both for ISAS and the AV Services guys who don't know what state the laptops will be in after they have been given out. When they are returned they have to go through and clear out any data that might have appeared – not an ideal use of time”.

The new way

ISAS still create an initial laptop build, after which an image is taken of the whole system and configuration but today when a loan laptop is returned, not only can this image be re-deployed in minutes, but the rebuild task can be done by AV services without any UST intervention.

“When a problem occurs, net-runna Enterprise allows us to rapidly recover a PC into a working state far easier and quicker than we could do manually. Without net-runna we could be spending upwards of a day trying to fix someone's PC and recovering their data”.

net-runna Enterprise can also be used on existing PCs during upgrades and patches - before commencing any changes a Recovery Snapshot is taken, so that if the upgrade should fail for any reason, the original working system can be reinstated in minutes.

Benefits to the university

- Improved ROI leading to enhanced and more productive use of resources
- for following years
- More efficient course delivery as a result of software continuity
- Reduced cost of IT support
- To AV services
- Time savings in laptop management
- The ability to work more efficiently and focus on strategic growth and management
- The provision of a further improved service to academics
- To academics
- Increased access to laptops
- Improved access rights leading to reduction in time delays

Benefits to students

- Improved learning environment
- Benefits to ISAS
- AV Services require less time from colleagues in ISAS resulting in smarter service provision
(Less time required to undertake fire fighting)

Conclusion

By using net-runna DMU has discovered it can improve its machine build time by 96% per machine. Course delivery and service quality are improved as the availability of the IT infrastructure increases.

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Dave Atterbury, Senior IT Systems Engineer at De Montfort University

Summary: how has net-runna enabled a 96% improvement in PC build times at DMU?

De Montfort University is the latest in a series of educational institutions to adopt net-runna Enterprise and benefit from enhanced IT infrastructure management, realised in part through a 96% improvement in PC build times.

The first phase in De Montfort University's net-runna Enterprise adoption involved the deployment of net-runna within the university's Audio Visual (AV) Services unit. AV Services manage the loan of equipment such as laptops, monitors, projectors and projection screens to academics throughout the institution, servicing approximately 150 teaching areas across the university campus and video conferencing across the globe.

Breakdown of De Montfort University's past and present IT methodologies:

- We used to lock our machines down but this was problematic...
- It impacted academics as their access rights became limited
- It did nothing to reduce the risk of laptop corruption or infection
- Infected machines had to be returned and rebuilt at 5 hours work per machine
- Whilst laptops were being recovered they were out of circulation sometimes
- putting an unnecessary strain on resources

The old way

- Machines had to be built from the state in which they were dispatched
- from our suppliers
- Information Services and Systems (ISAS) then had to take the machines
- and remove anything that wasn't needed and install anything that was
- Once laptops were returned, ISAS would have to go through and clear
- off any user data and potentially remove any viruses or trojans

The new way

- ISAS create an initial laptop build
- An image is taken of the whole system and configuration
- When a loan laptop is returned its image can be re-deployed in
- minutes, simply reversing any changes
- The rebuild can be performed by AV services without intervention from ISAS

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