



Client Background

Passaic County Community College

www.pccc.edu

Industry—Higher Education

Since its beginnings in the 1970s, Passaic County Community College has maintained its commitment to offer students the opportunity for a quality education at an affordable tuition. Today, PCCC has enrollment of over 13,000 students and operates four campus locations throughout Passaic County. PCCC offers over 60 degree and career programs and an award-winning faculty, as well as continuing education and community-based programs. The College offers a rich multicultural environment, vibrant extracurricular life, and supportive academic and advisement network to encourage student success.



**Hewlett Packard
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Platinum Partner



Passaic County Community College Provided with Greater Efficiencies with Desktop Virtualization Solution



Background

Passaic County Community College (PCCC) is a two-year institution located in Paterson, N.J., in the New York City Metropolitan Area. The college also operates Academic Centers in Wanaque and Passaic, N.J., and a Public Safety Academy in Wayne, N.J.

The school was chartered in 1968 and opened its doors in 1972. Today, PCCC serves about 13,000 students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college. The college offers two-year programs in a wide range of disciplines, and has transfer agreements with more than 25 four-year institutions.

PCCC has long relied upon technology to create the efficiencies that help keep tuition reasonable for its urban community. An HPE shop since 1995, the college has enjoyed a long relationship with HPE and with HPE Platinum Partner PKA Technologies. Several years ago, PCCC worked with HPE and PKA to virtualize as many of its physical servers as possible. When it came time to virtualize its desktops, the college naturally turned to its trusted partners for assistance.

Challenge

Maintaining physical desktop PCs is a major challenge for many organizations, and PCCC was no exception. The college had more than 2,000 desktops across four locations, making desk-side support a time-consuming headache. Replacing physical PCs with a virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) environment would enable PCCC's IT staff to manage and maintain the desktops from within the data center.

"You always have a lot of hand-holding with physical desktops that you don't have with a virtualized environment," said Robert Mondelli, VP of IT, Passaic County Community College. "It's much easier to maintain a virtualized environment than a physical environment with desktops scattered throughout the school. That's why we decided to roll out virtual desktops for our administrative staff, faculty and academic labs."

Mondelli had done extensive research and attended numerous workshops before selecting HP for PCCC's server virtualization project. He felt confident that HP solutions were the right fit for the college's VDI environment as well. Having selected the technology platform, he turned to PKA for technical expertise and resources.

"I felt that HPE's products were more advanced than what I saw from other vendors. Plus HPE had better support," he said. "I reached out to PKA and explained what I wanted to do and they helped guide the project."



About PKA Technologies

PKA Technologies, a certified woman-owned enterprise, has over 20 years experience providing IT solutions to Fortune 500, small and mid-size companies as well as schools and government agencies.

At PKA, we know that most solutions are unique and have individual complexities. Our key to finding the most inspired solutions is our ability to be a complete and committed partner--listening, learning, and responding to the unique challenges of every client and project.

Our strong alliances with leading technology vendors such as Hewlett-Packard Enterprise, Aruba, HP, Intel, Microsoft, Red Hat, Symantec, and VMware allow us to identify best practices that can be integrated into a solution to your most vexing challenges.

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Solution

Mondelli and his team decided to start by virtualizing all the desktops at the college's main campus. PCCC purchased two HPE servers — one production system and one for disaster recovery — and 100TB of 3PAR storage, including Fibre Channel, SAS, SSD and near-line disk components. The project also involved a network upgrade and replacing desktop PCs with thin clients.

"One thing we've learned is that when you virtualize, a lot of pieces of the environment have to be touched," said Mondelli. "When we started this project, we quickly came to the conclusion that we also had to update our network because everything now travels over the network. It's not at the user's desktop anymore. The network has to be capable of handling that transmission back and forth between the virtual desktop and the data center, especially when you're virtualizing 2000-plus desktops."

PKA was instrumental in developing the configuration for the systems, and providing engineers with VDI expertise to assist with the implementation. PKA also coordinated with HP, ensuring that the gear was delivered according to the project plan.

"PKA has been very good," Mondelli said. "They are very responsive to my requests and any issues that arise. We have a good working relationship with them and I value their expertise."

Results

PCCC's desktop virtualization project has caught the attention of other community colleges. When asked about ROI, Mondelli explains that VDI has eased the desktop management burden and provided other benefits as well.

"My counterparts in other colleges have staff members running from their office to other places on campus, helping people with their PCs. We don't do that anymore. My help desk stays put in the computer center. With desktop virtualization, they can provide support from their desks and the maintenance is greatly reduced," he said.

"The other big thing is data protection. When people have PCs on their desks you're challenged with ensuring data is backed up. We don't worry about that anymore because every user's desktop is backed up as part of our data center processes. Desktop virtualization gives us the ability to do that seamlessly for our users."

PCCC's relationship with PKA Technologies has been beneficial as well. By partnering with PKA, PCCC gains enterprise-class expertise from a local provider backed by HPE.

"It's hard for me to see any difference between working with PKA and directly with HPE. It's been seamless," said Mondelli. "PKA has a bunch of good people who really know virtualization. It's great that I don't necessarily have to go to HPE to get the support that I need."