

establishment

The Odyssey School, Maryland

students age

K-8

no. students

162

no. devices

150+

solution

Impero Education Pro



case study

background

Founded in 1993 and opened in 1994, The Odyssey School provides a nurturing environment for students with dyslexia and language learning differences. With a 1:1 program in place at the middle school, 80 students have access to their own convertible Fujitsu laptop, which they take to and from each class. This, alongside SMART Boards in every class, iPads, and dedicated computer labs, meant The Odyssey School required an up-to-date classroom management solution.

issues

While SMART Sync provided all the classroom management functionality The Odyssey School required, this product was later phased out by SMART Technologies, leaving Odyssey with an unsupported product. Also, there were issues with reliability and the ability to consistently connect to computers in the classroom using the SMART Sync product.

solution

Despite no longer supporting SMART Sync, SMART Technologies provide a recommended upgrade pathway for their customers so searching for an alternative product became easy. The Odyssey School's current licenses entitled them to credits that could be used to purchase Impero Education Pro at a discounted rate. After looking at this recommended product, The Odyssey School soon realized Impero Education Pro provided additional functionality and more reliable management features and the switch was made easily with the help of SMART's recommended pathway.

implementation

With a small IT team, and the majority of this team also teaching in the classroom, the school's part-time engineer was responsible for the implementation of Impero Education Pro. The implementation went smoothly and the team was provided with good support. The IT team tested the product among themselves over the summer and set up a teacher console and the whole process proved very straightforward.

benefits

Since implementing Impero Education Pro, The Odyssey School has realized several core benefits, including:

greater visibility – With live thumbnail view, teachers are able to actively monitor students even when they've moved to another class. This is particularly useful for students who need to be monitored more closely.

saves time – Before a class a teacher would have to walk around 12 computers and power them all on. With Impero Education Pro, Odyssey can tick all the computers in the lab and select power on all at once, which is a huge time saver.

supports their school mission – Odyssey's mission includes the four pillars: honesty, respect, kindness and hard work. Using school-owned devices students must respond appropriately when using these devices. Through live monitoring, Odyssey can identify students connected to the open network rather than the secure network. By monitoring this, Odyssey can correct their behavior in line with the four pillars.

Below: Marty Hankins's summary of Impero Education Pro

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Q&A with Marty Hankins, Director of Technology Education

how has Impero Education Pro helped give teachers control in the classroom?

Working in grades 1-2, often getting students to the right place online can be difficult. With Impero Education Pro I can send out web links and files that will automatically open on my students' screens. For frequently used web links, I can create a glossary and go back and open these later – it's a real plus!

It's extremely easy to use - if I want to get my students' attention, I'll lock their screens and say "What does that mean?" and they'll say "We have to pay attention". It's that simple! The students particularly enjoy the ability to broadcast their screen onto the SMART Board, or 'big screen' as they like to call it. Impero Education Pro offers lots of little ways to communicate with our students.

When it comes to our middle school students, we don't like to block things, so if we see our students playing games we'll send them a quick message such as "Don't play that game, shut it down." The students know that we've been monitoring their task performance and get on with the task at hand.

how does Impero Education Pro compare with SMART Sync?

SMART Sync provided us with simple classroom management tools; whereas Impero Education Pro goes beyond that. One of my favorite things about Impero Education Pro is the connectivity. It pulls through student devices based on active directory, allowing us to see the user ID of each student, unlike SMART Sync which still required each student to sign in – that's a problem in itself. It's been really good for our middle school students who all have laptops; Impero Education Pro allows wireless and wired devices in one group, providing the ability for a mixed environment which is ideal for our 1:1 program.

what are your next steps?

We've been getting more requests by teachers who want to use Impero Education Pro actively in the classroom. We're currently looking into buying more licenses to make this available to more teachers in the school.

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