SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

MDM solution helps Metropolitan Community College effectively administer its mobile device program.

At Omaha’s Metropolitan Community College (MCC), history students are traveling back in time and perusing the streets of 1850s London — without ever setting foot outside the classroom. Meanwhile, across campus, aspiring architects have the ability to view the finished landscape of a completely new building before a grain of dirt is ever unturned. And in the car shop, MCC’s prospective automotive technicians can be found tinkering with engines — without having to remove a single piece of equipment from under the hood.

Thanks to a tablet pilot program that has placed a variety of specialized apps in the hands of students, MCC is presenting its future workforce with unique and new learning opportunities. Serving some 45,000 students per year at eight locations across the greater Omaha area, the college seeks to deliver quality learning opportunities with lifelong educational programs designed to stimulate economic and workforce development — goals the mobile device initiative is clearly accomplishing.

“This program is absolutely enhancing the learning process in the classroom,” emphasizes Clifton Pee, director of IT networking services at MCC. “Students have access to great tools that are allowing them to learn a variety of concepts in a much better way.”

For example, says Pee, “Students are able to move through a virtual world and see what history looked like, or take a geographically based picture in real time and overlay a construction plan on top of it so they can see where the building is going to land before they build it. Or they can figure out where they are supposed to put their hands while working on a car engine. In the past, this type of learning was not even imaginable,” he continues. And it might still be unimaginable, were it not for the mobile device management (MDM) platform that allows MCC’s mobile program to thrive.

Managed Delivery

A key part of that preparation involved the deployment of the MobileIron solution. In addition to implementing the Virtual Smartphone Platform (VSP), MCC also relies on MobileIron Docs@Work to provide end users with an intuitive way to access, store and view documents, while allowing administrators to establish data loss prevention controls to prevent unauthorized distribution.

“We thought MobileIron gave us outcomes — instructors were given their own tablets to use in the classroom, as well as provided with wireless access to MCC’s network. The college also has several hundred devices available for students to check out — based on their particular course or cohort program — for time periods ranging from a single class to a quarter to the full two years of a program. Furthermore, various labs at MCC have been outfitted with computer carts stocked with the tablets.

While MCC does not currently support personally owned student devices or a BYOD program, Pee does anticipate that the college may begin accommodating this trend within the next few years.

“We’re trying to meet the needs of our students,” he acknowledges. “But first we wanted to make sure all of our faculty was up to speed and ready.”
a great platform for administering the student tablets and allowing us to keep track of where they go,” says Pee. “It also is a great tool for deploying software and being able to reclaim the asset if it is ever misplaced, lost or isn’t returned.”

Indeed, the solution offers the security and manageability features that MCC needed most. Because the devices are checked out for periods of up to two years, the college was seeking a way to effectively keep tabs on them, which MobileIron provides.

“Our faculty members have the responsibility of managing these devices and checking them out to students,” Pee explains. “This solution gives them the peace of mind that we’ve got them covered.”

The platform also allows IT administrators to remotely wipe a faculty member’s device if it is ever misplaced or lost. “We want to protect the student data that could be on there,” Pee points out. “We need to be able to ensure that level of privacy, and we are able to do so by locking down the device.”

App management is another critical advantage provided by the MobileIron MDM solution. To begin with, MCC is able to secure the devices so students cannot install their own apps.

“The tablet is really designed for a single user,” Pee acknowledges. “But we are using it in a multiuser environment and need to be able to oversee exactly what is placed on the tablets.”

With the MDM platform, it’s equally easy for the college to install the apps it does want loaded on the devices. Through MobileIron’s App Delivery Network, which boasts multilevel end-to-end security to protect enterprise data, MCC can distribute desired software to any and all devices — instantly and automatically.

“In the middle of a term, a teacher might find a new app and want access to it the next day,” Pee explains. “We can
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In addition, the tool allows the college to seamlessly deploy defined clusters of apps to specific sets of devices. “The class needs are different, depending on whether it’s an English class or a business course,” Pee explains. “For every set of faculty and students, we can distribute different apps.”

Furthermore, the solution helps the college ensure that devices are completely in order and ready for the next class or term. “It’s great being able to prep all of the devices very quickly between terms,” Pee confirms.

The MDM solution also makes license management a breeze. “When a college is managing licensing for 1,000 users on multiple devices, it becomes very challenging,” Pee points out. “But with this solution, we can manage it in groups; for example, issue licenses to all 30 tablets in a class at once.”

Most important, for IT administrators the MobileIron products remove the hassle and worry of managing the mobile device program, which in turn benefits MCC students.

“They truly are being given a unique way to learn, so they can go out in the workforce and be amazing employees someday,” Pee emphasizes.

Peter Landmark, an instructor in MCC’s paramedic program, concurs. “I think that one of the biggest benefits to having tablets for the students is that it gives them instantaneous access to a wealth of information and puts it into their hands in a format that is portable and surprisingly interactive,” he says.

For example, the class relies on several apps that have been specifically selected for the paramedic course, including Epocrates Rx and Medscape Mobile, both free pharmacology references that are continually updated with new information. Rather than lug around a bulky manual to help them identify a particular pill, “They are using new technology to replace older reference tools,” Pee reveals.

For the cardiac section of the course, students utilized the Heart Pro III app, which includes a three-dimensional rendering of the human heart that students can manipulate to further their understanding of the anatomy and physiology.

“It also allows them to integrate the electrical dysrhythmia a heart can experience with the physical manifestation of the abnormal rhythm,” Landmark reports. “The students seemed to find this very helpful.”

As they enter the homestretch of their clinical/field component, emergency medical technician (EMT) students will also have access to the ePCR app, which gives them the ability to electronically document patient care reports in the field, the same format they will ultimately encounter when they enter the workforce.

“This is just a small sample of the apps that students have been using in...
class, and we are on the lookout all the time for new ones that will add to their learning experience,” Landmark says.

Everything In Its Place

Of course, none of these learning enhancements would be possible without the security and manageability afforded by the MDM solution.

“MDM solutions allow organizations to provide secure mobile access to corporate IT resources on smartphones and tablets,” explains Vikrant Gandhi, a principal analyst at the market research and analysis firm Frost & Sullivan. “With MDM solutions, IT can manage the lifecycle of mobile devices – and users – from the time they enter an organization to the time they leave the IT environment. Aspects such as device configuration, privacy management, data security and data loss prevention, device compliance, user identity management, and support are part of providing MDM.”

Without MDM, Gandhi says, it can be extremely difficult to provide for managed mobility implementations, a point on which Pee concurs. “We are really enjoying the MobileIron solution,” he says. “It is allowing us to accomplish everything we need to.”

The IT director was introduced to the platform by his CDW•G account manager Mike McCleave. “Our CDW•G rep has been a great partner in working with us and MobileIron,” Pee reveals. “He’s helped us keep our licensing up to date, as well as been there for the initial consultation and whenever we have needed suggestions on how to move forward with the product. He helped us look at all the different options and has been a great partner in this process with us.”

And MCC can rest assured that as it continues to develop its mobile device program and begins to explore possible BYOD initiatives, CDW-G will remain a trusted resource every step of the way.

“We’ve gotten great input from our faculty, staff and students on the program,” Pee shares. “We will continue to move forward in transforming our options to enhance learning opportunities for our students, and better prepare them for the workforce. It’s nice to know that one of the pieces is complete as far as the tools for security and management.”

All Systems Secure?
How to support your organization’s BYOD program

If you haven’t developed a BYOD strategy within your organization, chances are you’ve at least begun to contemplate one. “BYOD is a market reality, and a powerful trend that is clearly impacting the way organizations design and implement their enterprise mobility frameworks,” reveals Vikrant Gandhi, a principal analyst at Frost & Sullivan.

By 2012, 59 percent of organizations had already jumped on board in support of the trend, and Cisco projects that by 2016, there will be 1.62 billion mobile devices in the workplace.

The rapid growth isn’t surprising, considering the significant benefits afforded to both staff and organizations. BYOD can represent a win for IT departments through a reduction in costs, ongoing end-user device management, troubleshooting and support.

Advantages aside, the explosion of BYOD has also sparked a series of challenges — primarily from a management and security standpoint — as rapid growth has made it difficult for some organizations to keep pace. So how is it possible to reap all of the promises of BYOD without putting your school or district at risk for security threats such as data loss and device theft? The concern is certainly valid: A Check Point Software 2012 market research study found that mobile devices caused an increase in security incidents for 71 percent of organizations surveyed, while more than half reported data loss as a result of unsecured mobile devices in a 2012 Ponemon Institute survey.

The solution is surprisingly simple: To effectively leverage the benefits of BYOD, organizations must first construct a clear, well-written policy, giving consideration to questions such as:

- What mobile devices will be supported?
- Who will pay for the data plan?
- What regulations and compliance issues must be maintained regarding data protection?
- What security measures are needed?
- Which applications will be permitted or forbidden?
- Which services and resources will workers be allowed to access?
- How will staff privacy issues be handled?

Ready to start the path to BYOD? Contact your CDW-G account manager today.