

CASE STUDY: VISION

Vision™ Classroom Management Software Keeps Florida High School Students On-Task and Online

Learn how Lincoln High School eliminated 90% of problems with student Internet misuse after adopting Vision classroom management software in the school's media center and classrooms, enabling teachers to focus on instruction and ensure safe and responsible use of the Internet.

Lincoln High School in Tallahassee, Fla., is located in the panhandle, right near the Georgia border. One of six high schools in the Leon County School District, Lincoln has more than 1,900 students in grades 9-12.

Internet access for students has become a fact of life in today's schools and with it comes the need to manage that access. Schools that use the Internet in classrooms and media centers have a covenant with parents - to ensure that access is used safely, wisely and for educational purposes. At Lincoln High School in Tallahassee, Fla., Netop's Vision™ classroom

management software with SurfLock™ has made Internet access and control seamless and non-intrusive.

Tom Vogelgesang, Lincoln's technology coordinator, said that more than 75 percent of the school's 1,900 students have Internet access at home, which means they're well-acquainted with all of the non-educational distractions the Web offers. It's imperative for the school to have controls in place to keep students focused on assignments and off non-instructional web sites. Vision allows the teachers and media specialist to monitor computer use without resorting to policing tactics. "With Vision, we know what the students are doing on the computers, and we're also able to direct their attention to what they need to pay attention to," Vogelgesang said. "It's one more tool in the toolbox to teach students that they need to stay on task."

Vision classroom management software is particularly helpful in Lincoln High School's media center, where media specialist Donna Shrum oversees student use of 35 computers. "If I didn't have Vision I would have a very difficult time maintaining the proper educational environment," said Shrum. "We have a district-wide Acceptable Use Policy that I'm responsible for enforcing and maintaining. It would be next to impossible without Vision and SurfLock." In addition to monitoring where students go on the Internet, Shrum can also see when they're having difficulties with a search, and offer assistance when needed.

Invisible Management of Internet Access

With the implementation of Vision classroom management software over the past four years, student behavior has modified. "It's a deterrent for the students," said Vogelgesang. "Just the idea that they're being watched tends to solve most of the problems. With Vision, I would say 90-95 percent of our problems with Internet misuse have gone away."

Shrum concurred. "When I first started using Vision it took awhile for the kids to understand that I could really see what they're doing. Now, after four years I have very little problem with students doing anything outside of instructional purpose." Shrum keeps a log of students who have improperly used the media center's computers, taking screen shots for documentation in case discipline is required.

"Vision allows me to focus on the positive interactions I want to have with students"

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"The first year or two that I had Vision I had more than 90 offenders," she noted. "This year I have nine for the whole school year. The students are very comfortable with it. They understand that we're not an Internet café."

Shrum likened Internet access to going on a field trip. "We're here to fill an educational use. I have an obligation to the students' parents and the school system to make sure the resources are being used appropriately."

Benefits for Teacher-Student Relations

Using Vision to manage student computer use has improved the interaction between teacher and student in Lincoln High Schools' computer and media labs. The software enables the teacher to guide and supervise student computer activity, helping

students to be both safe and productive on the Web. The combination of Vision with SurfLock gives teachers control over student Internet access, enabling promises made to parents about managed Internet use to be kept.

"It's an obligation of ours to use as much prudence as we can to keep the kids on task," said Vogelgesang. "We have gained the confidence of the parents because we don't have problems. They say you can't be everywhere at once, but with Vision teachers can."

"Vision allows me to focus on the positive interactions I want to have with students," said Shrum. "It's behind-the-scenes, and takes the policing element away from my personal interactions with the kids. If I didn't have Vision and had to hover over their shoulders, it would be this constant negative environment."

Smart Choice for the School

Vision classroom management software was also a sound choice for more basic reasons. Lincoln High School has more than 600 computers running on three networks connected by VLANs. Vision is used in four labs and the media center on 120 computers. "The price per machine was very reasonable, and it was easy to use," said Vogelgesang. "We'd had experience with a similar product that slowed down the whole network whenever I turned on the console. Vision doesn't affect our network at all." Classroom teachers especially like the screen block feature, which helps students focus on the class work rather than the computer screen.

Lincoln High School began with Vision 4, and is now beginning its transition to Vision 6, the newest version which was launched in February 2006. Vogelgesang said the incorporation of Vision was close to effortless. "It was so simple to implement it only took about five minutes to train the teachers," he noted. With the transition to Vision 6, the lab teachers are testing the new version, working out any kinks before it goes school-wide. "Once it's up and running I never have to deal with it. If I took it away my teachers would come after me."

Benefits of Using Vision and SurfLock

- Keeps students on-task in class room and media center
- Enables educators to monitor student Internet use in a positive manner
- Provides a toolbox for classroom management and instruction
- Easy to install and seamlessly integrated into infrastructure

DENMARK

Bregnerodvej 127
3460 Birkerød - DK
T: +45 4590 25 25
Support: +45 4590 25 10
Fax: +45 4590 2526
info@netop.com

UNITED KINGDOM

Atrium Court
The Ring
Bracknell
RG12 1BW Berkshire
United Kingdom
T: +44 (0) 845 466 9000
uksales@netop.co.uk

UNITED STATES

15725 SW Greystone Ct.
Suite 105
Beaverton, Oregon 97006
T: +1 503 352 3599
info.us@netop.com

737 N. Michigan Ave Suite 1510
Chicago, IL 60611 USA
T: 1 866 907 2971
info.us@netop.com

SWITZERLAND

Chasseralstrasse 1-9
CH-4900 Langenthal
Switzerland
T: +41 (0)62 957 70 40
info.ch@netop.com

