How the Danville Area School District Empowers Remote Learning with WhatsUp Gold

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CASE STUDY

INDUSTRY
Education

PRODUCT
WhatsUp Gold

SUMMARY
Serving more than 2,500 students, teachers and administrators, the Danville Area School District uses WhatsUp Gold to provide a stable environment for remote learning.

Challenge

When Jeff Ryan joined the Danville Area School District (DASD) as the Director of Information Technology in 2008, he brought a new vision for the department. His goal was to provide a cost-effective yet reliable infrastructure that could sustain business needs while maintaining a thriving learning environment for students.

He had no idea just how important that would be 12 years later, when the COVID-19 health crisis made remote learning a new priority worldwide.

Even prior to the global pandemic, maintaining a stable network infrastructure presented unique challenges to IT administrators in education. Now, with school closures sparking a dramatic uptick in the amount of traffic traveling through the network, many IT teams are scrambling.

But for DASD, the transition to remote learning has been smooth. This is thanks to the well-developed IT processes and diligent work done by the district's IT team—and some help on the network monitoring end from Progress® WhatsUp® Gold.

Solutions

Coming from the business world, Ryan was acutely aware of just how costly downtime can be. At the same time, as someone who takes great pride in operating a lean team and being able to do everything in-house, Ryan wanted a network monitoring solution that empowered that autonomy.

After initially trying SolarWinds, he decided to check out WhatsUp Gold—a solution he had used years prior in the business world.

WhatsUp Gold satisfied the three major requirements for the Danville Area School District, which were:

1. Easy implementation, with the IT team able to discover devices and create a network map within hours
2. Detailed statistics and insightful reports into device usage, traffic flow, disk utilization and other critical network benchmarks
3. At-a-glance visibility into the entire network, enabling proactive network monitoring

> "I knew almost immediately that WhatsUp Gold was what we needed"
>
> **Jeff Ryan**
> Danville Area School District

Results

Ryan and his team have been hard at work creating a stable network that fully supports the 2,500+ students, teachers and administrators that rely upon it, and the 600 GB of network traffic they generate.

WhatsUp Gold plays a critical role in this process, enabling the district's IT team to actively monitor nearly 100 devices. With at-a-glance network visibility and real-time alerts sent straight to their phones, the IT team is able to fix errors and identify network usage anomalies well before they're actually noticed by end-users.

"I don't like to be surprised when something goes down," Ryan added. "That's why I love the WhatsUp Gold dashboard. I can customize it with what's important to me—I get an instant snapshot of my entire network."

Even before the start of the 2019 school year, students in grades 1-12 already had Chromebooks supplied by the school. As the realities of the pandemic set it, the fact that the Danville Area School District had already established such an advanced virtual environment enabled the district's IT team to play from ahead. DASD was even able to roll out additional Chromebooks to kindergartners, knowing the network could take the additional traffic.

WhatsUp Gold gives the district's IT team complete confidence they would be able to handle the workload as the district switched to a hybrid learning model. In fact, DASD is able to

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spend more time working with teachers on innovative ways to bring the classroom home. This includes rolling out a comprehensive streaming setup involving OBS and Google Meet, complete with unique document sharing workarounds that further enhance the remote learning experience.

"Today, the impact of anything going wrong is huge—the kids really lose out," Ryan explained. "With everything up on a second monitor and easily visible, we are better positioned to ensure that doesn't happen. And in fact, we can even go one step further and really bring value to our students."

About the Danville Area School District

The Danville Area School District is a midsized, rural, public school district which spans portions of two counties in Pennsylvania. The Danville Area School District is an alliance of family, school, and community, committed to educational excellence and life success.

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