NetSupport DNA

Orchard Academy
Jonathan Butlin, IT and Communications Technician

Tell us about your school…

Orchard Academy is a junior school and is part of the East Midlands Academy Trust. We're based in Milton Keynes and the pupils we cater for are in Years 3 to 6. There are currently almost 340 students in the school.

What are some of the main IT challenges you faced before NetSupport DNA?

Our main challenge was monitoring how our technology was being used; we didn't really know exactly what the children were up to. We do have safeguarding issues cropping up here and there, so we also needed some help with identifying those. Before we installed NetSupport DNA, some of the online safeguarding issues were only caught if a member of staff happened to see them as they walked past the children using the IT equipment.

How has NetSupport DNA helped at the school?

I am the only IT technician for this school (and our infants' school) and DNA has a great deployment tool which makes it a lot easier for me as a lone technician to send out software across the network.

It has also been extremely useful for saving us money with energy monitoring and power management. It's certainly saving us a few hundred pounds here and there that would otherwise have been wasted.

How has NetSupport DNA helped with supporting your safeguarding efforts?

The safeguarding tools are what we use the most to track any issues that occur and NetSupport DNA has been absolutely essential in catching some of those. It has been really helpful – I can't overstate its usefulness. Previously our safeguarding was much more informal, whereas now it's all recorded, which is brilliant. We don't miss anything!

NetSupport DNA includes NetSupport School classroom management. What do you find are the main benefits to teaching?

Approximately six or seven of our teachers are using NetSupport School at the moment – and that's over 50

percent of our teaching staff. I've spoken to some of them who use it on a regular basis and they really like it: some find it particularly useful for helping the children who are struggling, so that they can direct them to a specific website or a specific piece of work and help them with any issues that they have – as well as watching what they're up to. The ability to monitor the children as they work is essential for the majority of the teachers.

What is it like working with NetSupport?

I've always had fantastic service from the Support and Sales teams – it's been brilliant. No problems at all!

How do your NetSupport solutions compare to previous solutions the school has used?

The main reason we started using NetSupport School is that I saw it in a previous school I was at and I thought it was fantastic. I tried really hard to persuade the leadership team this was what we needed here and eventually they agreed and don't regret it at all! Then NetSupport DNA was a natural progression from there.

How do you see NetSupport supporting the school's IT into the future?

There are plenty of features in NetSupport DNA that I am yet to discover. It's a great product and I'm really glad that the school took it on board.
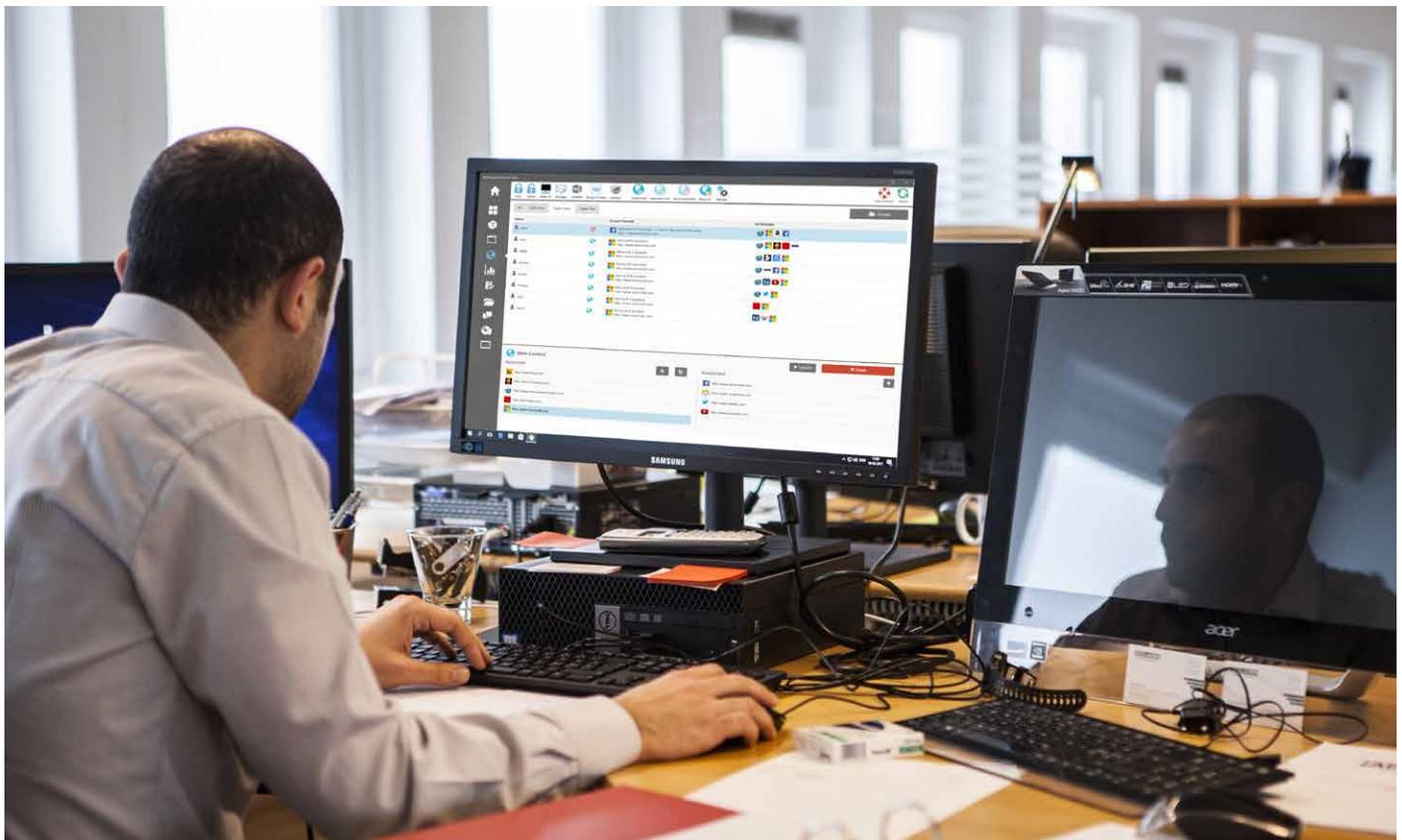
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