

Case Study

St. Thomas More Catholic High School

»Using the Fujitsu hybrid devices really helps prepare our students for the college environment and equips them with the skills they will need to thrive.«

Robin Herrington, Helpdesk Director, St. Thomas More Catholic High School



The customer

Based in Lafayette, Louisiana, St. Thomas More Catholic High School (STM) seeks to help its 1,100 students reach their individual potential and is committed to the development of the whole person. The school offers a rigorous academic program and prepares students to be global leaders and 21st century thinkers. STM supports its students with a dedicated faculty, technology, facilities, and resources that create the very best opportunities for success in life beyond high school.

The challenge

In 2011, St. Thomas More Catholic High School decided to introduce a one-to-one program that would equip every student and faculty member with their own device in order to enhance the classroom experience. Following a lengthy evaluation process, it decided that tablets would best suit its needs. Performance and mobility were the top two criteria and a tender process led to the selection of Fujitsu as the partner of choice.

“We wanted a fully-fledged Windows® OS that would be identical to real world scenarios so as to prepare our pupils for college and working life,” explains Robin Herrington, Helpdesk Director, St. Thomas More Catholic High School. “Our technology committee, made up of teachers, parents and community leaders, decided that Fujitsu was the best fit for our vision.”

However, in 2014, it was time to refresh the devices and a new internal team made the decision to start from scratch and rerun the evaluation and tender process.

“We ran strenuous benchmarks on every system that we evaluated and the T935 performed at or near the top in every metric,” says Network Specialist, Chris Landreneau. “These tests covered the performance of every hardware component from SSD IOPS to memory latency to the accuracy of the stylus. We then organized several testing groups to use the devices in the actual classroom. The goal was to push the tablets the way they would be used in the classrooms, maybe even beyond, and the results and feedback on the T935 were exceptional.”

“Performance and mobility were again key factors, but we also wanted ink-input functionality and the ability to easily share information via Microsoft® OneNote®,” adds Herrington. “Once more, Fujitsu came out in front, not only because it offered larger screen size and the ability to handle processor-intensive applications such as Adobe® Creative Suite, but also because we had built up such a strong relationship with the company.”

The customer

Country: United States
Industry: Education
Founded: 1982
Employees: 123
Website: www.stmcougars.net



The challenge

St. Thomas More Catholic High School’s objective was to refresh its existing estate of tablets with a more modern hybrid device that would allow for more robust pen-input functionality.

The solution

Following a comprehensive evaluation process, the school chose the FUJITSU Tablet LIFEBOOK® T935, a versatile 2-in-1 Ultrabook™ with ultra-thin, durable aluminum and magnesium housing, a rotatable WQHD display and pen-input support.

The benefit

- Robust, fluid pen-input encourages more people to use the device in tablet-mode, increasing in-class collaboration
- Transformed user experience with faster boot up times, less noise and virtually no downtime
- Improved performance means the device can handle even the most demanding applications, such as Adobe® Premier
- Students man the internal helpdesk and, as a result, emerge as fully-certified Fujitsu engineers with a host of relevant IT experience, significantly enhancing their future prospects

The solution

St. Thomas More Catholic High School chose the FUJITSU LIFEBOOK® T935 Convertible Tablet PC Ultrabook™, a versatile 2-in-1 Ultrabook with ultra-thin, durable aluminum and magnesium housing, a rotatable 33.8 cm WQHD IGZO™ display and pen-input support. This means it can be used as both a tablet and a laptop depending on the users' needs while it has the processing power to smoothly run the most demanding applications.

"With its robust casing and flexible choice of input, the FUJITSU LIFEBOOK® T935 is the perfect device for the classroom environment," says Herrington. "It also has precise inking capabilities for capturing notes and artwork."

The school imaged the devices with Microsoft® Windows® 8.1 and a range of educational applications before first deploying them to faculty and students. "Training is the key to a successful rollout," says Technology Integration Specialist, Sandra LaGrange. "Every user underwent comprehensive training to bring them up to speed with new features and functionality. New students received nine hours of training while teachers and upperclassmen received refresh training."

What is perhaps most striking about the school's use of the devices is in the way it manages support. Rather than use an external provider, Herrington relies on a team of 18 students who, as part of a recognized course, serve as helpdesk members and engineers, handling everything from cracked screens to faulty motherboards.

"Fujitsu brought in an engineer from its Memphis facility to train the helpdesk team so we could manage every incident in-house. Each student is assigned to a specific department, and every teacher has a single point of contact so issues get resolved quickly," continues Herrington. "What's great about this approach is that by the end of their time on the team, each student is a fully-certified Fujitsu engineer, which boosts college and job prospects considerably."

The benefit

One of the most immediate advantages of the new devices is the switch from a hard drive to a solid state drive (SSD), which increases speed and reduces noise – a considerable concern when you have 25 devices running simultaneously in a classroom.

Products and services

- 1,310 x FUJITSU LIFEBOOK® T935 Convertible Tablet PC Ultrabook™

"The difference in terms of uptime, reboot time and speed is night and day. We also have doubled the RAM to 8GB, taking our applications to the next level," comments Herrington. "With the enhanced performance the device delivers, we can even use Adobe® Premiere to edit videos more quickly. Doing that on the older tablets took double the time with half the efficiency."

The new tablets also provide much more fluid and precise pen input at a higher resolution, which has led to a dramatic change in its classroom usage. "We are seeing more students and teachers using tablet-mode than ever before. Users are embracing the changes, especially with lessons that rely strongly on the use of the stylus," comments LaGrange. "That, in turn, changes the way we teach and learn in the classroom. It makes for a much more collaborative and interactive educational experience."

The school now uses a number of key applications, including DyKnow, Moodle, MathXL and Microsoft OneNote to bring learning to life. Students and teachers can easily bounce between subjects and topics while sharing notes and information effortlessly. And, because the tablet is half the weight of its predecessor, it's less of a burden on young shoulders.

Conclusion

With the new school year only recently begun, St. Thomas More Catholic High School students and teachers are looking forward to really digging into their new devices and exploring the possibilities.

Kelley Leger, Assistant Principal and Technology Administrator states, "This is the smoothest start to the school year that we have experienced since moving to a one-to-one environment. I attribute much of this to the Fujitsu T935 and its performance and functionality. As a premiere 21st century Catholic high school, St. Thomas More is committed to providing our students with the knowledge and skills needed to become a leader in this global society. Therefore it is our duty to provide them with the best tools on the market to attain this success." Herrington adds, "These new devices empower our teachers and students to think outside the box and transform the educational environment and, most importantly, prepare our students for the future."

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Robin Herrington, Helpdesk Director, St. Thomas More Catholic High School

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