Warsaw Community Public Library (USA)

Ten years of powerful public computing.

Background

Ten years ago, broken software and IT issues were the only results of the public computer system at the Warsaw Public Library (WCPL), located in Warsaw, Indiana. In 2004, the WCPL went from headache-inducing PCs to an efficient computing system when they were introduced to Userful Desktop. A decade later, the WCPL has added four more Userful Desktop workstations to make a total of 24 stations to serve its patrons, who are still enjoying the simple and secure Userful public computing solution.

Challenges

Before deploying Userful Desktop, Network Administrator at the WCPL, Tyson Barnett, witnessed phenomenal growth in his community and the resulting increase in demand for computer access for the citizens of Warsaw, Indiana.

The WCPL had made a significant investment in Microsoft™ Windows PCs to create a reliable public computer solution for patrons. However, Tyson Barnett was also immersed in the growing frequency of technical challenges and virus problems of Microsoft™ Windows PCs that were not designed to support a public computing environment.

In addition to adding more desktop computers, the library hired additional staff to support the technology and provide services to library members. Unfortunately, the difficulties created by trying to use Microsoft™ Windows PCs as public computers were becoming unmanageable.

Barnett explained, "With our Windows-based desktops, four of the computers would be down at any given time because of viruses, hacking, and other problems. Now, with the Userful Desktop stations, we don't have to waste any down time on maintaining them, which is phenomenal."

> **"** It's very easy and user-friendly. I think it's great because when I go on vacation, I don't have to worry about there being any issues.
>
> - Tyson Barnett Network Administrator at The Warsaw Community Public Library

Solution

Barnett was first introduced to the Userful Desktop public computing solution when he saw it demonstrated at a conference. He was instantly impressed. The crucial advantage with Userful Desktop was that the software was designed specifically for libraries. In libraries, public computers need to accommodate a wide range of needs, ensure privacy, and offer features like time and print management, which can require additional software integration.

Just from the conference demonstration, Barnett found that Userful Desktop would actually resolve all of the prior computing issues with ease, and create an enhanced user experience. The initial rollout of the computer deployment for the WCPL included five workstations, which operated four desktop computers, making a total of 20 public access computers.

Barnett said that transition to Userful Desktop was seamless. "Patrons took to the new system like ducks to water, there were virtually no problems. Our patrons love it, and it works great."

Results

Today, Barnett continues to be extremely pleased with the ease-of-use, customer satisfaction, and cost-savings that Userful Desktop has provided for the library. Patrons at the WCPL use the virtualized computers for a variety of functions including surfing the web, searching for jobs, creating job applications and resumes, and academic testing, all of which are easily supported by Userful Desktop.

"I've told other libraries that I have recommended Userful Desktop to that you don't need IT staff to manage the system," Barnett said. "It's very easy and user-friendly. I think it's great because when I go on vacation, I don't have to worry about there being any issues with the computers."

He also emphasized the benefits of the secure Linux operating system.

"We can tell our patrons that they are safe, and they don't have to worry about viruses. That is a huge thing, especially with libraries, which are already concerned about privacy. The fact that we can give our patrons that guarantee is invaluable," he explained.

Substantial savings in hardware and software expenditures also play a large part in the WCPL's success with Userful Desktop. Barnett said that the electricity and staff time costs alone have been immensely reduced since the implementation on Userful Desktop.

Ten years later, the Userful Desktop public computing solution continues to provide the Warsaw Public Library and its patrons with proper public computer access and plans to support the library's continued growth for years to come.