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Wayne State Provides Students & Faculty with Remote Access

About the CFPCA at Wayne State University

![WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY]

The College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts at Wayne State University provides academic courses that teach students how to master the latest technologies in the fields of multimedia, audio, video, animation, design, modeling, and more. By providing students with these resource-intensive software applications, the CFPCA has heavy computing needs. The college currently has 300 high-powered lab computers on campus for students.

Summary

When the campus at the College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts (CFPCA) at Wayne State University shut down due to COVID-19, students were unable to physically access the lab computers that hosted specific software applications they needed to use. Their IT team needed to find a solution fast – a solution that would allow the students to continue learning remotely and effectively.

With Splashtop Business Access, students were able to remotely access and control lab computers from their own devices. The IT team successfully enabled the students to easily and securely access the resources they needed to continue their education.

The Challenge: Students Unable to Use Lab Computers In-Person

The computer labs at the CFPCA are a vital resource for students. The CFPCA offers courses in fields such as communications, digital music recording, media production, design, animation, and more. The labs provide students with computers powerful enough to run the software they use regularly in those fields.

Software applications on the lab computers include Avid Media Composer, Avid Pro Tools, the entire Adobe Creative Suite, Logic Pro X, Vectorworks, Autodesk, 3ds Max, and more.

When COVID-19 shut down the Wayne State campus, students were unable to go to the computer labs in-person.

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Chris Gilbert
Application Technical Analyst
Wayne State CFPCA

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Chris Gilbert, Application Technical Analyst at the CFPCA, said that students didn't have computers that were powerful enough to run the software they needed for school.

"We're finding that a lot of students buy $200 laptops," Gilbert said, "that's good if you're just writing a paper, but when you're doing a CAD drawing, it's not really going to work for you."

Since students couldn't run the software on their own devices, Gilbert and the rest of the IT team needed to find a way to make the apps accessible to the students.

VDI and VPN fail to deliver

Gary Cendrowski, Director of Technology for the CFPCA, listed the reasons why a virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) didn't work.

"With VDI there's not enough GPU power," Cendrowski said, "Between that and the lag, the bootup, and the cost, it didn't work. And then with Adobe, you can't run Adobe on a VDI. You can't run (Autodesk) Maya on a VDI. You could do some vector stuff but very little."

Gilbert explained similar shortcomings with virtual private networks (VPN).

"With VPN, the students don't have a powerful enough computer to handle all the stuff we're throwing at them," Gilbert said, "For example, with video editing, the students are doing 4k, even up to 8k, and their MacBook Pros aren't going to be able to handle that."

The Solution: Enabling Access to Lab Computers from Any Device

Wayne State University was able to overcome its challenge by deploying Splashtop to provide remote access to computer labs. Gilbert mentioned that students were able to easily access and use their video editing software from their own devices.

"We have iMac Pros in the labs at school and the students are able to remote in and everything works for them," said Gilbert.

Splashtop enables users to remotely access and control Windows, Mac, and Linux computers from any Windows, Mac, iOS, Android, or Chromebook device.

"Luckily Splashtop supports Chromebooks since the school has been lending out Chromebooks to students who don't have computers or can't afford them. So that feature was really nice!" said Gilbert.

By Fall, the CFPCA will have 3,500 students set up with Splashtop to access the college's 300 lab computers.

Results: Great Feedback From Students, Faculty, and IT

For now, the IT team has been rolling out Splashtop over the Spring and Summer semesters to great results.

"We have a handful and we've been stress testing to see if everything works. As of right now everything's been good," Gilbert said.

In addition, the IT team at the CFPCA has praised how easy it is for them to deploy, scale, and manage their users and computers with Splashtop.

Cendrowski and Chris Scalise, Senior System Administrator, also highlighted other particularly useful features.

"The file transfer is great, the dual monitor is great, the messaging works really well," said Cendrowski, "Those are all tools that we use."

"The logs have been an incredible asset for us because we can see who's logging in, when they're logging in, what files they transferred," Scalise said, "It provides great information for Chris and I to see who's using what lab and at what time. I'm sure we'll be using that in the future to make suggestions as to which labs are heavy use and which aren't heavy use."

The feedback from students was positive as well.

"With apps like Media Composer, After Effects, and Premiere Pro, there was a fear that they wouldn't translate very well for someone working from a Chromebook and remoting in and doing heavy editing. So far the feedback from students has been great!" Scalise said.

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Splashtop Business Access is the low cost, high performance, and most secure remote access solution for schools, districts, and universities. Start your free trial today to see for yourself how easy it can be to provide your students and faculty with access to on-campus machines.

"You're going to have a lot more people from Wayne State coming to you for Splashtop because they've been watching us. And they've been asking me in our restart committees how I'm doing. I've been telling them it just works."

Gary Cendrowski
Director of Technology
Wayne State CFPCA

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