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The Importance of a Successful Network Monitoring System

Technology has become an integral part of running a school. Email is now a primary source of communication and the Internet is a necessary administrative and educational tool and resource. Despite all the wonderful advantages that technology offers, there is one glaring problem: Technology can be unreliable.

The loss of email or the Internet for several hours can be extremely frustrating and possibly even detrimental to the school. A crash to a system that has not been backed up for a week will cause the school to lose that week's worth of work. No matter how damaging these technological problems can be, they still happen. Therefore, the best way to ensure a more reliable network is to have a successful network monitoring system in place.

I have outlined a list of four common network scenarios below each with a problem and a quick solution provided by a successful monitoring system:

- The school's backup system failed to run last night and, when you arrived at school in the morning and logged into the system, it let you know. This allows you to inform the IT staff immediately and have the system backed up successfully. Therefore, you will never be caught without a backed up network.
- Your critical accounting server had a hard drive failure and informed you or your staff the moment this occurred so that a replacement drive could be immediately ordered.
- You were notified that your email server stopped receiving email at 11:00 a.m. and by 11:15 a.m. your staff had the problem resolved.
- Your school's Internet line went down at 2:00 a.m. in the morning and a trouble ticket was opened with the vendor at 2:30 a.m. When you arrive in your office in the morning, the line is up and operational.

These are just a few examples of how a well designed and implemented network monitoring system can ensure that critical services remain up and operational as well as avoid long periods of costly downtime.

These network monitoring packages have come down significantly in price over the years and have become more robust in allowing IT personnel the ability to monitor numerous devices and services on a granular level.

One of the more popular packages that you may want to look at is the Ipswitch product called "WhatsUp

Professional" (www.ipswitch.com) which does a wonderful job of monitoring those critical network devices and services at a price point that will not inflict too much pain on your technology budget.

I hope that all of you have had a wonderful finish to your school year. Have a safe and enjoyable summer.

Sincerely,



Paul Crawley

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