



McDougal Littell Case Study

Success Story

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Jeffrey Eckman, IT Manager, McDougal Littell

Success Story

Challenge

- To support employees in different locations while reducing overall support time and costs.
- Manage software distribution
- Identify and correct configuration problems remotely

Environment

Macintosh

Solution

Timbuktu Pro Enterprise
netOctopus

Benefits

- Access any information on any desktop.
- Diagnose, troubleshoot and resolve problems instantly.
- Substantial cost savings through increases in productivity.
- Employees receive real-time training.

McDougal Littell has been using Netopia's netOctopus and Timbuktu software for years. Although their purchase is not a new one, they continue to reap the benefits of both software products on a day-to-day basis. McDougal Littell has to support employees in the Boston office and occasionally remote offices and therefore having a remote support tool like Timbuktu is essential. netOctopus allows McDougal Littell to see, inventory, configure and manage their hundreds of system and software settings on every workstation on their network without the System Administrators having to leave their desk.

McDougal Littell was founded in 1969 and initially published supplementary soft-cover textbooks for secondary English teachers. In 1994, McDougal Littell became part of Houghton Mifflin Company, headquartered in Boston, MA. Houghton Mifflin is a leading publisher of textbooks, instructional technology, assessments and other educational materials for the elementary and secondary school and college markets.

Smart and Simple Support

Jeffrey Eckman is an IT Manager at McDougal Littell in Boston. Himself and a team of five others support the offices in Boston and Evanston, IL. They support over 400 end users along with providing support to telecommuters, mobile professionals and remote offices. Also the corporate help desk at Houghton Mifflin uses Timbuktu across their WAN for remote troubleshooting.

Timbuktu: Showing Not Explaining

On a day-to-day basis Timbuktu is used at McDougal Littell not only for troubleshooting issues and having to resolve problems, but also for remote instruction and holding employee's hands through certain processes. On Timbuktu's real-time training, Eckman notes, "We can connect to a machine and show the end user how to do something. Whether it is how to print or go over a new program, we can connect to a machine in the same building, on the same floor or halfway across the country. Showing them how to do a task live is much easier than trying to explain it over the phone."

Being able to remotely control a computer dramatically reduces the time necessary to solve the employee's problem. Timbuktu's remote control feature enables virtually instantaneous resolution. Without Timbuktu, Eckman's support team technicians would have to talk the employee through a problem without seeing what the employee was seeing. Also it allows technical support to help an employee down the hallway or even in another city, without leaving their desks. Timbuktu allows Eckman's support team to see exactly what is on the employee's screen and manipulate the user's mouse and keyboard to fix the problem while showing them how to solve the problem themselves next time.

The exchange function of Timbuktu allows McDougal Littell's technicians to access the hard drive of a remote machine to copy and move files and folders between computers and delete files from other computers. "Also there are all of the other functions in Timbuktu as far as setting the screen to a certain size, minimizing the screen to see all in a smaller window, really amazing features," Eckman says.

netOctopus: Making the Tedious Jobs Simple

netOctopus allows McDougal Littell to turn their network into a strategic asset by making systems management smart and simple. Instead of spending hours or even days on installing software updates, Eckman uses netOctopus to do these mundane tasks. netOctopus helps the Administrators ensure the McDougal Littell employees have the software updates they need.

Eckman notes that software distribution, which was once a repetitive task, is now automatic. "We obviously use it to collect data to identify and correct configuration problems remotely, adjust software settings on the machines and to ensure consistency," Eckman says, adding that the fact that netOctopus has the ability to see and control so many aspects of the operating system is such a wonderful thing. "There is nothing really out there like netOctopus, we love it!"

Automatic software rollouts and updates can be done in half the time at McDougal Littell due to netOctopus. Auditing software remotely rather than manually allows Eckman and his team to stay put while not disrupting the end user.

Eckman says netOctopus' most notable feature is asset management, it ensures software license compliance. In fact, he says, making sure all the users at McDougal Littell have the software updates they need and maintaining compliance helps ensure the best use is made of their IT assets. "netOctopus software inventory allows us to get a clear picture of exactly what is running on each machine," says Eckman.

Easily Manage

Eckman has been using Netopia's software for over eight years. The administrators are very hands on with both Timbuktu and netOctopus. Even the end users are very familiar with Timbuktu and the non-technical users find it simple to use.

Timbuktu and netOctopus help the Administrators at McDougal Littell take control of time by taking control of the systems they administer. "It is hard to think of a time before we used Timbuktu and netOctopus and I could not imagine not having them. They are both invaluable support tools", Eckman says.



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