

Upgrading to Windows 10: How SHI helped one school migrate 45,000 devices

By Todd Missey

Migrations can be complicated. But a migration for 45,000 devices, with a small and often over-stretched IT staff, not to mention an unwelcome bout of ransomware, is nearly impossible without the proper set of tools, dedication, and the right team members.

That's what one school district needed when it decided to switch its devices from **Windows 7** to **Windows 10**—a daunting task, and one that would affect more than 75,000 students.

Here's how the school district did it—and staved off a **major ransomware attack** in the process.

Too big for one team

Because of the system's size and the limited IT staff available, the school district was in desperate need of a set of tools and experts capable of maintaining a smooth and consistent transition across all 45,000 devices. The IT team had the know-how to image the devices, but with so many to deal with, it would have been almost impossible to accomplish such a feat alone.

The plan was to use System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM), which could automate the process of creating images and tasks for the deployment of Windows 10. The only problem? The school district was using an outdated version of SCCM, which couldn't handle the new technology that brought Windows 10 to life. It was also dealing with over 150 physical distribution points, which was too large a number for the school district's team to handle on its own.

The system needed a total overhaul and some additional expertise. SHI stepped in to help.

The right tools, and the right timing

After years of putting it off, the district's SCCM was in desperate need of an update and a reorganization. The first step was to move those 150 physical distribution points to the cloud using Microsoft Azure to align with a Microsoft-recommended architecture—something the school had been reluctant to try. However, doing this meant that the district could manually scale the cloud service to meet its changing demands, without having to install and provision additional distribution points. Everything could be done via one point in the cloud.

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SHI also helped create some of the automated task sequences that would be run through SCCM to

smooth the imaging process, and utilized Windows BranchCache to reduce the number of data transfers from cloud-based distribution points by the district. Rather than have to manually wipe, create, and load a new image onto each machine, the IT team, through SCCM, would run the task sequences set by SHI, and use minimal data transfers along the way.

Miraculously, this SCCM update came just in time, preventing the WannaCry attack from locking up 9,000 devices that had been left unpatched. In the middle of the rollout, the WannaCry malware had somehow made its way onto the school district's network. By working quickly to roll out the patch through the newly-updated SCCM, now capable of handling such a job, the school district dodged a potentially large-scale and costly attack on the district's devices and servers.



A successful migration, and a strong foundation

45,000 devices servicing more than 75,000 students is no small number. But between the knowledge of the IT team and the boost in service from SHI, the rollout could be implemented without major delays.

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With SCCM up and running, a strategy in place, and SHI's help with the first few hundred devices, the implementation is now running smoothly. The school district's IT department can handle and easily roll out the remaining devices for administrators, faculty, and students over the coming months. It will still be a long haul and a time-consuming project, but made more manageable with the updates to SCCM and the teamwork between SHI and the school district.

Not only is the school effectively **rolling out Windows 10**, it now has an updated SCCM system that can support the district and its IT team moving forward. All thanks to the cooperation of the district, tools from Microsoft, and SHI's expertise and licensing services.

Case Study: Upgrading to Windows 10: How SHI helped one school migrate 45,000 devices
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