

# CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

## Executive Summary

### Gateway Technical College

**Industry:** Higher Education

**Location:** Kenosha, WI

**Faculty and Staff:** 600

**Students:** 30,000

#### Challenge:

- Faculty needed a way to deliver video-based course content to local students in library computer labs and students studying remotely.

#### Solution:

- Deploy a centrally network-managed workspace virtualization infrastructure to support shared computing environments.

#### Results:

- Students can stream and playback educational videos in-network and over the Internet with high performance and quality.
- Gained efficiencies based on the ease of image deployment to desktop machines, freeing up staff to focus on helping students with our software applications instead of focusing solely on desktop troubleshooting.
- Enables future plans that will facilitate administrative staff and faculty to work remotely.

## College Deploys a Centrally Managed Virtual Desktop Solution to Enable Faculty to Stream and Playback Video as Part of Coursework

### Gateway Technical College Advances Capabilities for Computer Labs and Distance Learning with RingCube vDesk

Gateway Technical College is located in Southeastern Wisconsin and serves all communities in Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth counties. The goal of the college is to ensure economic growth and viability by providing education, training, leadership, and technological resources to meet the changing needs of students, employers, and communities. Gateway offers instructional programs from its campuses and through distance learning opportunities, such as online courses, to more than 30,000 students annually. Approximately 6,000 full time equivalent students are registered in over 65 career training programs.

### Challenge

The Learning Innovation Division at Gateway is made up of 23 members and is comprised of the IT, IS, and distance learning departments. The Information Technology department is responsible for central server and network infrastructure. The Information Services department maintains the student information system and the college's ERP system. The distance learning department provides technical support, faculty training and innovative approaches to distance learning technology.

The main applications Gateway uses include Datatel's Colleague system, an advanced enterprise resource planning (ERP) software solution designed specifically for higher education where all student and employee records are kept and accessed through a terminal session. Additionally, the college employs the Blackboard Academic Suite as its Learning Management System.

Gateway's student body is made up mainly of individuals seeking career training. Most students are part time and attend courses both on campus and remotely to advance their careers. Faculty members

often show video to students as a part of regular instruction. According to Jeff Robshaw, CIO and vice president of Learning Innovation at Gateway, one of the main drivers for looking at a workspace virtualization solution was to ensure video playback worked at full performance within the virtual desktop.

“Since our instructors have a need to share DVDs or internet-based video over their laptop as part of their instruction, the video problem we were experiencing with VDI-based solutions was pretty significant,” says Robshaw. Our exploration of desktop virtualization coupled with our need for quality video playback in distance learning situations led us to RingCube. We had been exploring other options and RingCube provided a cost effective solution that would enable us to offer a quality experience for our students, especially students who were taking coursework remotely and would not be present in a physical classroom.”

## Workspace Virtualization Solution

Robshaw and the Learning Innovation team at Gateway conducted a year-long evaluation of multiple technologies that included several desktop virtualization products from a variety of vendors such as Citrix XenDesktop and VMware View.

“We rolled out a pilot in our library in Kenosha that included several desktop virtualization products from different vendors, but found that all of those solutions still struggled with streaming video over the Internet and even with playback within our own network,” says Robshaw. “We had heard that video support was coming with future releases for some of these products, but we needed a more immediate solution.”

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Robshaw and his team attended a desktop virtualization event hosted by VCOMP Solutions, a national IT solutions provider focused on the higher education marketplace, and saw a RingCube vDesk demonstration.

“We already had a great relationship with VCOMP and had used their support for some of our product rollouts,” says Robshaw. “After seeing a demo of vDesk, we knew we needed to include it in our overall evaluation alongside the other products we were testing.”

“We wanted to offer Gateway a high performance desktop virtualization solution that had a low total cost of ownership and vDesk really fit the bill for what Gateway was looking for,” said Bob Panos, managing director, VCOMP Solutions. “With many of the other desktop virtualization choices available, the entry cost is extremely high. RingCube solves that entry cost problem by not requiring a lot of backend infrastructure, allowing companies to use existing PCs and get systems up very

quickly and easily."

Robshaw and the team rolled out vDesk in the Kenosha pilot and chose a network configuration where vDesk is stored on a network file share and runs locally on the end user's PC. According to Robshaw, he and the team were impressed by how quickly they were able to get the virtual workspaces up and running with vDesk-enabled PCs with full-performance video playback inside the virtual environments.

"vDesk's ability to stream and playback video, both from the Internet and in-network was far and away better than any of the other solutions we evaluated," says Robshaw. "We now see vDesk as the front runner for our academic applications accessed within a virtual desktop."

Robshaw selected vDesk as a part of the Learning Innovation team's overall infrastructure recommendation for the college's libraries around the district. Robshaw says the ability to standardize desktops in multiple locations is another big benefit of Gateway's vDesk deployment.

"Our libraries are the main locations where we plan to use vDesk initially," says Robshaw. "The libraries each have an open lab where students work on course assignments for their programs and many of our students will use different campuses at any given time. With vDesk, we can provide the exact same experience for the student who lives in Racine, but who takes a course in Kenosha or even works remotely from off-campus."

### Results

A seamless rollout was one of the first immediate results of the vDesk pilot deployment, according to Robshaw.

"From the library's perspective, rolling out vDesk was seamless and our users didn't know the difference," says Robshaw. "Our goal from the beginning has been that the desktop virtualization solution we deploy would have to be transparent to the students and staff. With vDesk, we continue to deliver the same level of service and support for our students, while at the same time we gain efficiencies with the backend infrastructure and management of the images."

In terms of cost savings, gaining efficiencies and expanding services is where Robshaw says he expects to see the biggest return.

"Having a desktop infrastructure that is easier to maintain and to deploy images will definitely free up resources," says Robshaw. "Campus staff can be freed up to focus on helping students with the applications used in our classrooms instead of getting bogged down in troubleshooting, ghosting, and deploying images as a result of deploying vDesk."

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“Considering how vDesk has given us a robust, secure and easily managed solution for our libraries, I can see this as a natural next step in the future where certain members of our faculty could build a workspace image the way they want in a learning module, easily self-provision those workspaces to students and continuously update them from a single image.”

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As far as next steps, Robshaw says that he and the Learning Innovation team have begun to discuss mobility for faculty members and staff and overall preparedness for disaster recovery.

“We’ve discussed emergency response scenarios and the idea of having a rack of laptops on hand for those who need to work remotely in the case of an emergency and vDesk would be perfect for that scenario as well,” says Robshaw. “Considering how vDesk has given us a robust, secure and easily managed solution for our libraries, I can see this as a natural next step in the future where certain members of our faculty could build a workspace image the way they want in a learning module, easily self-provision those workspaces to students and continuously update them from a single image.”

### For More Information

To find out more about RingCube vDesk, please visit:  
<http://www.ringcube.com/portal/content/products/vdesk/>

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