UC College of Nursing Redesigns Course Delivery with iPads Managed by AirWatch

The Client

Following its roots back to 1889, the University of Cincinnati's College of Nursing has a strong history of successful students and alumni. The college's programs have expanded to include more than 2,700 students in a variety of educational programs from undergraduate through doctoral degrees. Embracing mobility was a natural step for the Ohio-based school, whose vision states, "Through creative leveraging of technology, the UC College of Nursing will lead the transformation of health care in partnership informed by the people we serve."

The Challenge

In 2011, the UC College of Nursing deployed a small number of iPads to faculty to reap the educational benefits of apps like iTunes U, iBooks and eReader. The college's IT department distributed app codes to users' devices as needed. The college also used SharePoint lists to keep track of the iPads, but they quickly realized this was not an efficient way to manage the fleet of school-owned devices. "The primary driver of identifying a mobile device management solution was to automate app distribution. We needed a solution that simplified this process and could grow with our long-term mobility plans," explained Chris Edwards, assistant dean for information technology and communications and director of the center for academic technology and educational resources (CATER), UC College of Nursing. Edwards and the UCIT team first learned about mobile device management (MDM) and mobile application management (MAM) through independent research and discussions with other schools. After completing a comparison of EMM solutions, UCIT selected AirWatch® by VMware®. "AirWatch was the best match for our needs because it works with a range of devices, not just iPads. It gives us the ability to automatically distribute apps and configure devices," said Seth Thompson, equipment/applications specialist and server administrator in CATER.

The Solution

During the on-premise implementation, the UCIT team enrolled close to 500 devices into AirWatch – mostly iPads and a handful of Mac OSX laptops. The college also opted to institute a bring your own device (BYOD) program to

Solution Overview

- Client: The University of Cincinnati College of Nursing
- Industry: Education
- Geography: North America
- Features: BYOD, MDM, MAM, MEM
- Devices: 100 – 500

give students and faculty the option to use a personally-owned device to access resources on the school's network. According to Edwards, users adopted AirWatch quickly. "There has not been resistance to the software, as the benefits outweigh any perceived drawbacks. iPads help reduce the costs of textbooks and other student services, which in turn boosts the marketability of UC's nursing program. This drives tuition revenue for us while lessening the financial burden of textbooks for students," said Thompson.

The UC College of Nursing is the first college at the University of Cincinnati to successfully integrate iPads into education through redesigning course delivery and creating a community around a central suite of apps. "Throughout the last 20 years, I have experienced a lot of technologies that have impacted education, such as computers in the classroom, wide area networks, wireless, the Internet and now mobility," said Edwards. "The iPad and supporting technologies like AppleTV, iTunes, App Store, iBooks and iTunes U have transformed the way we learn, interact and collaborate. We're able to implement and manage this technology securely with AirWatch."

The ways faculty and students use iPads in the classroom is extensive. The devices enable access to SharePoint, FaceTime, email, group meetings, eText for courses, research journal reviews, note taking, recording audio and video, content creation and improved grading procedures. "We are very proud of our mobility movement and the positive, college-wide changes it has brought about," said Jason Day, instructional technologist in CATER. "Since implementing the iPads, we have experienced significant savings from purchasing e-Books instead of paper text books. The iPads have streamlined our grading processes and increased the faculty's connection with students." Associate Director of UC East's BSN program, Melissa Wilson, MSN, APRN, CCNS-BC, incorporated the iPad into her Complex Care of Adults course using FaceTime and the college's simulation lab. Wilson encouraged large and small group collaboration by sending a few students to the remote simulation lab and having the rest of her class dictate care procedures from the classroom using FaceTime. Wilson found that students were more engaged in the activity and their interactions with each other when iPads were part of the lesson.

While overseeing the college's mobility initiative, the team has learned one of the challenges of using iPads is evaluating the extensive selection of apps available in the app store. "Creating a community of practice around a standard suite of educational apps allows individuals to be trained on those apps, collaborate with others and learn how to use the app to its fullest. We would not be able to facilitate app distribution and take advantage of the associated cost savings of the Apple Volume Purchase Program without AirWatch Mobile Application Management," Day said.

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– Chris Edwards
  Assistant Dean
  UC College of Nursing