Asset-Tracking Solution Takes Houston Middle School to the Head of the Class

BUSINESS CHALLENGE
Excel spreadsheets and sticky notes made routine asset management and end-of-year audits time consuming and inaccurate. Funds to replace equipment in the middle of its life can be better utilized elsewhere

SOLUTION
Wasp MobileAsset makes it easy to verify, seamlessly deploy, and collectively utilize IT assets across its campus. End of year audits are completed in a timely manner with better reporting outcomes for West Briar.

BENEFITS
75% less time spent tracking fixed assets

0 unnecessary asset replacement expenses

Immediate IT asset deployment upon receipt

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Located in Houston, TX, West Briar Middle School is part of the Houston Independent School District and Over 1,350 students and 80 teachers
Grades 6 thru 8

Being able to accurately account for the equipment will eliminate having to repurchase equipment that has been lost or misplaced; the replacement money comes from the school's funds. There are much better things we can use the money for than replacing technology we own but can't find.
- Erskine Vanderbilt, Campus Network Specialist, West Briar Middle School

With the regularity of final exams, schools within the Houston Independent District must annually audit all fixed assets, including computers and technology equipment, and report findings to the District. This arduous task is made even more difficult since it must be completed within a six-week timeframe amid an already busy spring.

"I have gone as far as late June getting my audit report to District; bad news for the principal and for me," said Erskine Vanderbilt, campus network specialist at West Briar. "I spend a huge amount of time locating equipment, and if the equipment can't be accounted for, it is marked as missing."

Missing equipment costs squeeze the already tight budget. West Briar must use its limited dollars to purchase replacement equipment instead of investing in new technology - technology that's important for educational advancement. Even inexpensive items like USB cables can add up to hundreds of dollars. "Being able to reutilize items is essential to the school's process and budget. To a big company, $250 for cables may not be much, but to us, it's a considerable amount," Vanderbilt said.

Roll Call
Each campus receives an annual list from the Houston School District itemizing their fixed assets.
Once received, Vanderbilt must account for the equipment, verifying what's actually on hand. Anything that's on the list but unaccounted for is noted on a shortage list. If the school's shortage list exceeds the limit set by the district, the school is flagged. West Briar's manual asset tracking system led to misplaced and lost items, and as a result, the school was often flagged for exceeding the annual shortage limit.
"No one was happy with the situation," said Vanderbilt. "It cost time, money and lots of unwanted attention from the district."

Honor Roll
Determined to improve the time-consuming district audit and end needless spending on misplaced devices, Vanderbilt purchased Wasp Barcode Technologies' MobileAsset solution with a WPA1200 mobile device and barcode printer. MobileAsset is an affordable asset tracking solution, designed to improve efficiency and eliminate errors. Vanderbilt expects Wasp to be fully operational by the start of the 2010-11 school year.

Already, he is seeing significant benefits.

With help from the teachers, Vanderbilt inputs equipment into the MobileAsset database. Since the school-year was underway and equipment was distributed before MobileAsset's implementation, he created check-lists of all teachers' equipment. Teachers review the lists and return them to Vanderbilt. He also uses the Wasp mobile computer for immediate update and verification as he travels the school and classrooms.

"I love the idea of using the mobile device," said Vanderbilt. "It provides an ongoing and automated way for me to update the equipment each and every day. It's been a big time saver as I am constantly verifying our inventory."

Next year, teachers will not need checklists. All equipment will include a barcoded asset tag and will be tracked in MobileAsset. Vanderbilt will check equipment out equipment to teachers and keep an accurate, up-to-date account of each teacher's inventory. If teachers trade or lend equipment, they complete a form and Vanderbilt updates the information in MobileAsset. Likewise, if a computer or device is out for service, MobileAsset will note its original status and location, as well as that of any loaner replacement device.

MobileAsset enables teachers to seamlessly receive new equipment. In the past, a new device would arrive at the school but couldn't be used until Vanderbilt received an asset tag from the district. Although West Briar will continue using the district's asset tags for all equipment, MobileAsset allows Vanderbilt to dole out new gear as it arrives and add the district's tags when they are shipped.

"Teachers could wait a month or more for the district to send out the information. Now I can put it into the Wasp system, call it all up and distribute it to the teachers immediately," said Vanderbilt. "I enter the purchase order into the Wasp system, where the equipment has gone, and when the tag comes in, I can assign the district's tag to the device. Wasp will bring up all items from that purchase order and replace the temp asset number with the permanent asset number."

Top of the Class
Using Wasp MobileAsset, Vanderbilt expects to complete his mandatory, annual audit within three weeks, not three months - a 75% time-saving. Since his primary role is to provide IT support to the school, saving this much time during the annual audit will reduce his stress and grief while enabling him to provide the support the school requires.

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WASP MOBILEASSET EMPOWERS WEST BRIAR MIDDLE SCHOOL TO:

- Quickly and confidently complete mandatory asset audits
- Immediately deploy assets and transfer among staff
- Eliminate wasteful spending associated with unnecessary asset replacement

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