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Chad Shepherd
CIO
St. Louis College of Pharmacy

St. Louis College of Pharmacy is using Fujitsu tablets to create a more engaged and active learning environment.

At a glance

Country: USA
Industry: Education
Founded: 1864
Website: www.stlcop.edu

Challenge

As one of the pioneers of one-to-one programs, St. Louis College of Pharmacy (STLCOP) is continually refreshing its devices on campus. The College needs to find the right devices to meet the needs of students and faculty.

Solution

As a longtime Fujitsu partner, the College has been investing in approximately 500 Fujitsu LIFEBOOK PCs every year. The most recent model to be evaluated is the Fujitsu LIFEBOOK T726.

Benefit

- Precise pen input and the ability to share with the class makes for a more engaged and active learning environment that boosts student learning outcomes
- Fujitsu devices with digital projectors eliminate the need for costly and unreliable smartboards, thus saving money
- The Fujitsu LIFEBOOK is ultra-reliable and can withstand the rigors of college life, and an on-site, fully authorized service center quickly takes care of any issues if they do arise



Customer

Founded in 1864, St. Louis College of Pharmacy (STLCOP) is the third-oldest continually operating college of pharmacy in America. Since its start in the midst of the Civil War, STLCOP has been a steadfast presence in the St. Louis community and leader in the profession of pharmacy for more than 150 years. Today, more than 7,000 alumni practice in 48 states and 14 different countries. STLCOP is located in one of the country's most distinguished biomedical communities, with neighbors including Barnes-Jewish Hospital, Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, and St. Louis Children's Hospital.

Products and services

- Fujitsu LIFEBOOK® T726



Challenge

STLCOP is a pioneer in the use of digital devices in the classroom, introducing its first one-to-one program in 2002, long before the idea of equipping students with personal devices became popular. Since then, it has evaluated the technology on a three-year basis to ensure that it has the right devices to meet its needs.

"Initially we started out using consumer-oriented tablets but, although they cost less upfront, we found that they were far more prone to failure, so the actual total cost of ownership (TCO) was greater than enterprise-focused machines," explains Chad Shepherd, CIO, St. Louis College of Pharmacy. "So we came to evaluate the market in 2006, and we invited Fujitsu to submit a device. It blew everyone else away from the outset."

The evaluation process centered on a matrix of key criteria, including TCO, reliability, battery life and robustness, as well as consistency of product design over a long lifecycle. The latter ensures that expensive peripherals can be used across multiple models to protect the investment.

"Fujitsu scored highly across the board and, equally important, it was happy to act as a partner rather than a vendor," adds Shepherd. "We were treated as a big fish and given the attention that a global blue chip company might expect. That's one of the reasons that since 2006, we have not undertaken any further vendor evaluations."

Solution

Since partnering with Fujitsu, STLCOP has purchased a number of different models starting with the Fujitsu LIFEBOOK T4210. The College is currently piloting the Fujitsu LIFEBOOK T726, a 2-in-1 that delivers the best of a notebook and a tablet. Its 31.8cm anti-glare IPS display supports variable input with pen or touch while it also shares the port replicator and modular bay options with the LIFEBOOK series, minimizing TCO.

"Each student in an incoming class gets a brand new Fujitsu T-series convertible, which is replaced when they reach the fourth year. On graduation, they get to keep the device," continues Shepherd. "We purchase around 500 devices every year with a total of 1,800 on campus at any one time."

The tablets are used to run standard office productivity tools and Microsoft® OneNote® as well as more specialized applications such as Camtasia®, Adobe® Creative Suite®, IBM® SPSS®, etc. In order to encourage the faculty to get the most out of the technology, the College established its Instructional Design Academy, which is a systematic effort to shape active learning and fundamentally change the educational experience.

"The faculty has now moved away from passive note taking and ad hoc usage to a more integrated approach," says Shepherd. "That's having a big impact in the classroom."

Benefit

Students and educators alike have embraced the potential for interactive engagement. The ability to annotate, circle, underline and make notes with the precise pen input is also proving popular.

"Students love making annotations and sharing them with the class via the data projectors. It makes for a more collaborative and rewarding experience," comments Shepherd. "This approach means we have not needed to invest in expensive and unreliable smartboards. We also use the tablets in exams using Moodle®, which has helped us move to a paperless environment."

In addition, Shepherd and his team have been continually impressed by the reliability and robustness of the Fujitsu devices: "Ninety percent of the computer problems we experience are user-induced, but the build is of industrial quality so even dropping them rarely does lasting damage. Put simply, the Fujitsu LIFEBOOK can take a beating and keep working," says Shepherd.

If there are any problems, STLCOP has established a fully authorized Fujitsu service center on campus where four certified technicians can solve the vast majority of day-to-day issues.

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