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NetVanta Switch-Routers Bring Simplicity and Cost Savings to Huntsville City Schools

The Customer

The Huntsville City School System is comprised of more than 50 schools, with more than 3,000 faculty and staff members that serve over 23,000 students on a daily basis. Located in one of the south's most technologically advanced communities, network connectivity is a cornerstone of the education experience.

The Challenge

With 54 remote locations, Huntsville City Schools needed a streamlined approach to network management. With a mixture of switches and routers, troubleshooting was hindered and network costs were high. The school system needed a uniform approach to network management to improve troubleshooting and reduce costs.

The Solution

Huntsville City Schools chose ADTRAN NetVanta 1224R switch-routers, a unique all-in-one network access solution that combines the functionality of a 24-port managed Layer 2 Ethernet switch, IP access router, firewall, VPN and WAN interface all in a single 1U-platform.

The Benefit

ADTRAN's NetVanta 1224R all-in-one network access device allowed Huntsville City Schools to replace three standalone devices (CSU/DSU, router, and switch) with a single cost-effective device which is easy to troubleshoot and requires minimal IT resources to maintain a highly available, robust network.

The Huntsville City School System has more than 50 campuses that depend on a reliable and robust network. Keeping this large number of remote sites up and running with limited staff and tight budget is a big challenge for IT Director Ron Potee.

With a mixture of networking equipment, troubleshooting issues requires an education in a variety of vendor products and protocols. As is the case with many schools, networking equipment typically resides on someone's desk in the school's main office. When equipment goes down, problem calls often result in phoning one of the school's administrative assistants, having them assess what LEDs are lit and then having them wiggle cables and jostle equipment to try to troubleshoot the problem.

Realizing the need for a streamlined approach to network management, Potee became one of the first customers to implement ADTRAN's NetVanta integrated switch-router products. Price, reduced sparing, and network simplification were three of the advantages that made the ADTRAN solution a perfect fit for the Huntsville City School System.

"We started making the switch over three years ago and estimate 30 percent of our network is now ADTRAN switches," said Ron Potee, manager, Information Technology, Huntsville City Schools. "ADTRAN's NetVanta 1224R all-in-one network access device allowed us to replace three standalone devices (CSU/DSU, router, and switch) with a single cost-effective device."

Prior to implementing the NetVanta switch-routers Potee had an ADTRAN CSU/DSU, Cisco router, and Foundry switch deployed at each site. The NetVanta switch-routers have replaced this three-box configuration with a single 1U-high unit configuration. Now, troubleshooting has improved and Potee appreciates the cost-saving advantages offered through ADTRAN's highly reliable one-box solution.

"I am immensely pleased with ADTRAN's product, quality of support and exceptional prices. ADTRAN enables us to manage our network better. Our future plans include replacing our switches until we are an all ADTRAN network."

*Ron Potee, IT Director
Huntsville City Schools*

"We paid a pretty penny for the Foundry switches," he said. "And Cisco is good, but it's expensive. Our school networks are critical, requiring that we deploy replacement units at each location in the event of equipment failure. Now, we only have to deploy one unit, reducing our costs by as much as one-half."

Moving forward, Potee plans on continuing to replace switches in his network with ADTRAN products. As technologies such as VoIP make their way into school districts, Potee feels he will be ready to take advantage of technology advances and predicts moving to Power over Ethernet switches with ADTRAN. Because of the product's five year warranty and superior support, Potee is confident he'll be able to maximize his investment in ADTRAN solutions.

"ADTRAN has allowed us to simplify our network while adding additional functionality and reducing our overall costs," concluded Potee. "We will move to all ADTRAN switch-routers in the near future."

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