Making the Grade

How Lee University Expertly Handled Their Annual Technology Refresh

Lee University is a private four-year liberal arts college with more than 4,000 students, located in Cleveland, TN. Over the past two decades, the university has undergone a remarkable transformation with significant growth in academic programs, student enrollment, faculty expertise, and diversity. When Lee University was ready to perform their annual technology refresh they called in a trusted partner—the experts at Connection.

First: Choose the Equipment to Refresh

Nate Tucker, Director of IT Systems at Lee University wanted to refresh nearly 200 of their 1300 computers. Tucker elaborated about the scope of their annual technology refresh, "The type and number of systems fluctuates from year to year, and that's because some years we include our labs and some years we don't. This year, we refreshed a few systems that were in public areas across campus, but for the most part we focused on faculty and staff."

The task of keeping so many machines at Lee University up to date can be daunting, but Tucker chooses proven technology for the campus every year. He remarked, "One of the things we found is that Lenovo systems have great performance—we are extremely satisfied with the Lenovo computers based on 2nd and 3rd generation Intel Core processors that we deployed this year. The quality of the

Lenovo product is very reliable. Currently we are 100% Lenovo in the PC area and since we are an educational institution, we have some Macs on campus. So we have a mixture; about 80% of our computer devices are Lenovo."

Next: Call Upon a Dedicated Technology Partner

"One of the things that Connection is helping us explore is using all-in-one devices in the classroom. We currently have a workstation with technology equipment there for the teacher. Now we're going to take a look at all-in-ones because they are easier and cleaner, with less mess and less wires. It provides a good solution for faculty while they're teaching," Tucker asserted. He went on to say, "All-in-ones are also a perfect fit for our general public areas. Having a CPU under the desk in a public area results in damage to the machine—people kick them and knock them over, even with the secure devices that we've

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tried. Having an all-in-one in our areas for general public use gives us the ability to secure one device."

Then: Invest in the Process

Tucker detailed what the refresh cycle looks like when the university is ready to roll out new computers. "We get the machines after they have been sent through Connection's imaging process. Then we go through a testing process to make sure the machines meet our requirements. We then notify the users that their machines are here on campus and schedule a time and get them deployed to the users' workstation area or the lab."

Tucker continued, "The key ingredient for a successful refresh is to get the machines in, turn them on, and have them work out of the box. Connection delivers a product that can meet that goal. They do the imaging for us, we turn it on, and it just works. In addition, we went through a certification process that enabled us to service Lenovo computers on-site. Having that relationship with Connection is great, and those are two key areas where we have gained the most benefit."

Last: Evaluate the Outcome

Choosing quality technology is only one piece of the technology refresh equation for Lee University; choosing a quality IT partner is equally important. Tucker noted, "One of the things we do annually is select the vendor that we are going to use for the year. Since we have had such great success with Lenovo and Connection, we will stick with them next year and simply

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focus on determining what to budget for the machines."

After the refresh, Tucker graded the outcome. "The only issues that we had with the technology refresh were on our end, and that was in the identification of where the assets were on campus; in an education setting these assets move around."

Tucker also mentioned, "We had an offer of assistance from staff at Connection that are close to our campus to help roll the machines out if needed. The fact that they offered and wanted to help us meet our deadline let us know that they are a partner that we should keep around."

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