

DePaul Catholic High School



High School Goes High Tech: Fujitsu LifeBook Tablet PCs Help Students Make the Grade

Challenge:

Incorporate technology education into existing curriculum.

Solution:

Equip students and teachers with Fujitsu LifeBook T3000 and T4000 Tablet PCs, which are portable, versatile and durable.

Benefits:

Students are now technologically savvy, better organized, more engaged and enthusiastic about learning.

“I’m not saying that technology is the be all and end all. But, by putting technology in kids’ hands I think we have raised the caliber of education here.”

- **Sue Parler, Information Technology Manager, DePaul Catholic High School**



Projecting lectures onto a screen at the front of the room, teachers write on the screen as they would a chalkboard, while students follow along and take notes on their own convertible Tablet PCs.

DePaul Catholic High School is a 50-year-old private college preparatory high school located in Wayne, New Jersey. The 850-student school, which has 70 teaching faculty, offers advanced placement, honors, college prep and foundational levels of study.

The Goal: Technologically Literate Students— But Not at the Expense of Core Curriculum

The goal of every high school is to teach students reading, writing and arithmetic and help prepare them for life after graduation. Whether students go directly into the workforce or on to college, computer skills are a prerequisite. At most colleges, laptops are standard equipment, students do much of their research online, and email is a necessary tool for communicating with professors. Beyond college, technology savvy is a job requirement in virtually every field.

DePaul Catholic High School, like most schools, recognized this and in turn offered students tech-related classes teaching everything from word processing to programming. The problem they encountered was that many students, particularly those in honors and advanced placement classes, didn’t have time in their already jam-packed schedules to enroll in these critical technology classes. “Our brightest students were missing out on this key component of their education,” says Sue Parler, DePaul’s technology coordinator and a longtime teacher. “We wanted all of our kids better prepared for the future.”

Fujitsu LifeBooks: A Technology Tool, Not a Distraction

DePaul began researching options to give students better access to computers and incorporate technology into its curriculum. “We wanted the technology to be a tool rather than a distraction,” says Parler. The school started researching personal computers and determined that it needed a device that would be portable, reliable and, of course, durable. DePaul also wanted to give students and teachers the option of taking handwritten notes and turning in handwritten work or using a keyboard to, say, write composition papers.

The school equipped its teaching staff with Fujitsu LifeBook® T3000 convertible Tablet PCs and offered voluntary classes to get them up to speed for the school year. Shortly after that, it bought more than 100 Fujitsu LifeBook T3010 Tablet PCs for students participating in the Vincentian Program, which comprises students taking more than four honors classes. “Those are the kids who would have lost out on technology classes,” says Parler. The school tested the waters with these students during the school year and made plans to equip all of its students with notebooks the following year. Ultimately, the school bought 800 Fujitsu LifeBook T4010 convertible Tablet PCs and 70 Fujitsu LifeBook T4020 convertible Tablet PCs.

Students pay a \$550 annual fee to lease a computer, which they are assigned as freshman and given the option of buying as seniors. Though students know they need to take care of their computers if they want them to be in good shape when they graduate, each computer comes with a four-year warranty. “Fujitsu’s service has been outstanding for us,” says Parler. On behalf of Fujitsu, MindSHIFT provides onsite warranty and out-of-warranty repair services to DePaul on campus once every week for no additional charge for the school or the students.

Now, incoming freshman start the school year with a two-hour training session with Parler. Then most learn about technology as they go by applying high-tech tools to everything from English papers to science experiments. “The kids were thrilled to get their hands on the Tablet PCs,” she adds.

Naturally, the school was concerned that kids would be able to use technology to cheat on exams or chat with friends at inappropriate times. DePaul has put several measures in place to ensure that this isn’t a problem. “Among other things, we have a software program that stops all instant messaging or blocks kids from accessing the Internet,” says Parler.

Better Organized, More Enthusiastic Students

The goal of DePaul Catholic High School was to give its students the technology skills they would need in college and in their careers. Three years after introducing the Fujitsu LifeBooks, the school has not only helped its students become adept with computers, it has raised the bar on education.

Using the school-wide wireless network, students can download handouts, assignments, test scores and any other pertinent information for the day. They also submit assignments and papers electronically, and communicate with teachers and fellow students by posting inquiries and answers on eChalk, an online communication system for students, teachers and parents.

“Kids who were totally disorganized have become completely organized,” says Parler. “Their computers are essentially three-ring binders with everything they need.” Meanwhile, kids are using technology to go above and beyond some of the requirements of their classes. “They are creating PowerPoint presentations and turning in Web presentations as homework,” she adds. “The quality of their work has improved light years.”

Teachers, meanwhile, do all attendance, grades and lesson plans electronically. In a typical class, they’ll distribute lecture material to students electronically. Then, using their own Fujitsu Tablet PCs, they can project lectures onto a screen at the front of the room and write on the screen as they would a chalkboard. But whereas they would need to eventually erase an old-fashioned chalkboard, teachers can now save this work and share it with students as an additional aid or give it to students who were home sick from school.



Using their Fujitsu convertible Tablet PCs and a school-wide wireless network, students can download or submit assignments, or communicate with teachers and fellow students.



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Newer teachers are learning this method of teaching in college, making it an easy transition for them. Though veteran teachers have had to learn new skills to teach in a high-tech classroom, most of them have embraced the change. "For many of us who have been teaching for a while it reignited the fire," says Parler.

While opponents of technology in education argue that bringing computers into the classroom is impersonal, DePaul has seen the opposite effect: It's opened the doors for communication between students and teachers,

*"Fujitsu's service has been outstanding for us."
says Parler.*

as well as teachers and parents. "Parents can now go online and see exactly what work teachers are giving their kids," says Parler. At the same time, parents say they are seeing improvements in their children's organization and enthusiasm. All that, and their kids will have the technology skills they'll need down the road.

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