NETSUPPORT
SCHOOL

From three perspectives:

Teacher // Student // Technician

nss

I'm Miss Smith, and I teach English and German. Today I'll show you how I use NetSupport School to plan, prepare and conduct my classes.

Before I take my first class, I'll guide you through the basics of NetSupport School and then you'll see how I use it throughout my teaching day. It's pretty easy to use, and I'm sure you'll see endless possibilities for using it in your school as we go through the various functions.


The NetSupport School user interface is clearly laid out with the classroom management features represented by icons down the left hand side of the screen, and the instruction and interaction features across the top.

I can power on and log in all the student machines from my PC, so they're all ready for the start of the class.

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I set up my first class with the NetSupport School Class Wizard. Here, I can fill in details such as teacher name, lesson title, room details, show the time left until the end of the lesson, and the lesson objectives. These details are also used in the Student Register, so I don't have to fill them in twice! It also provides a stress-free way of connecting to all the students' machines.

I also have the option to display the student toolbar on the students' PCs.

Some teachers don't use this, but I like the students to see what restrictions are in place, whether they're being monitored, or to be able to silently ask for help.
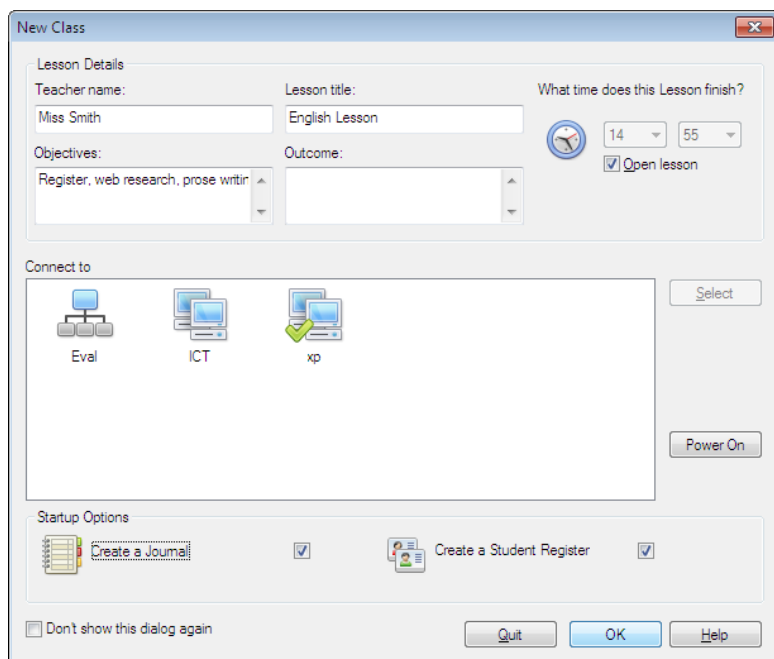
I can monitor every PC in the class to see how well all the students are working. The students' screens are shown in real time as thumbnails on my screen, like this:

From this view I can change the size of the thumbnails and rearrange them as I wish. I can also view a single screen, initiate a chat with a student or transfer files to all or selected students. NetSupport School also shows any help requests as a flashing question mark next to the relevant screen thumbnail.

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My first lesson today is English. I've prepared our activities with the help of the NetSupport School Lesson Planner which gives me the option to create a timed set of tasks. Using drag and drop functionality I can easily create a plan that includes sending and collecting work, running a test or showing my screen to the students – and all in advance of the lesson.
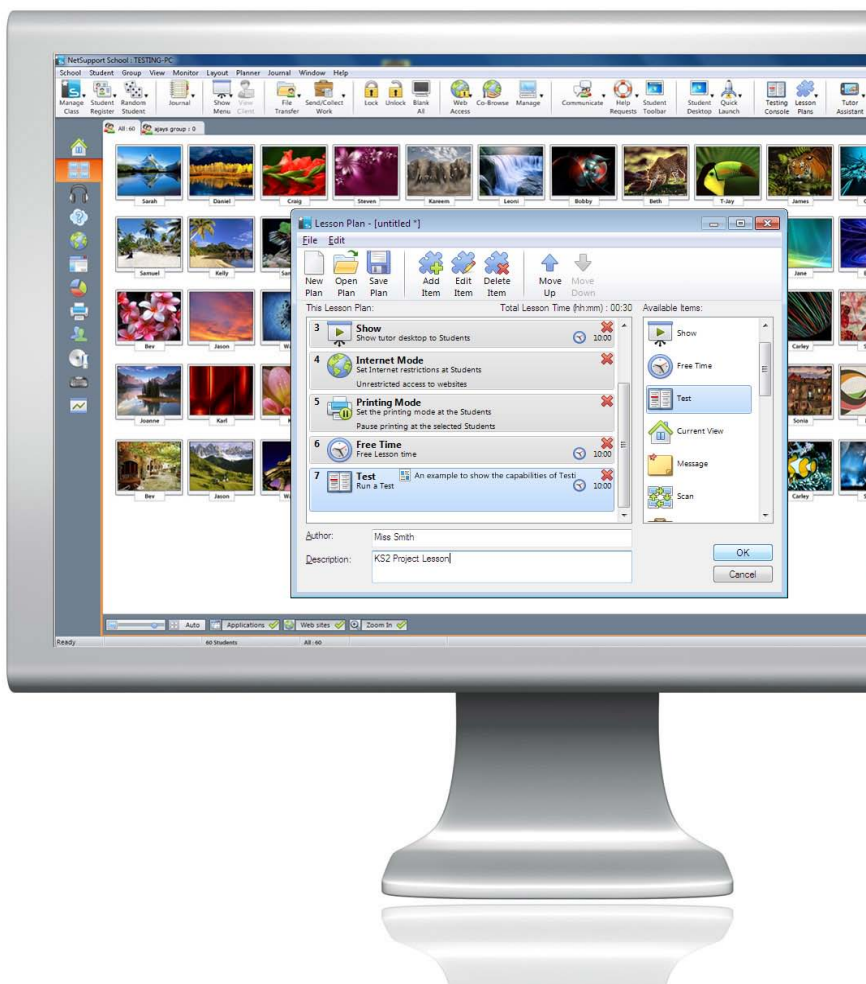
I've uploaded some resources we will need for the lesson – a website, an image and a file – so that the students will be able to access them when they need to. The fact that teachers can make a multi-media lesson really enhances the pupils' learning experience.

Student resources

It's nearly time for the students to come in, so I'm going to load the classroom layout for this particular group and power on all their PCs to save time at the start of the lesson.
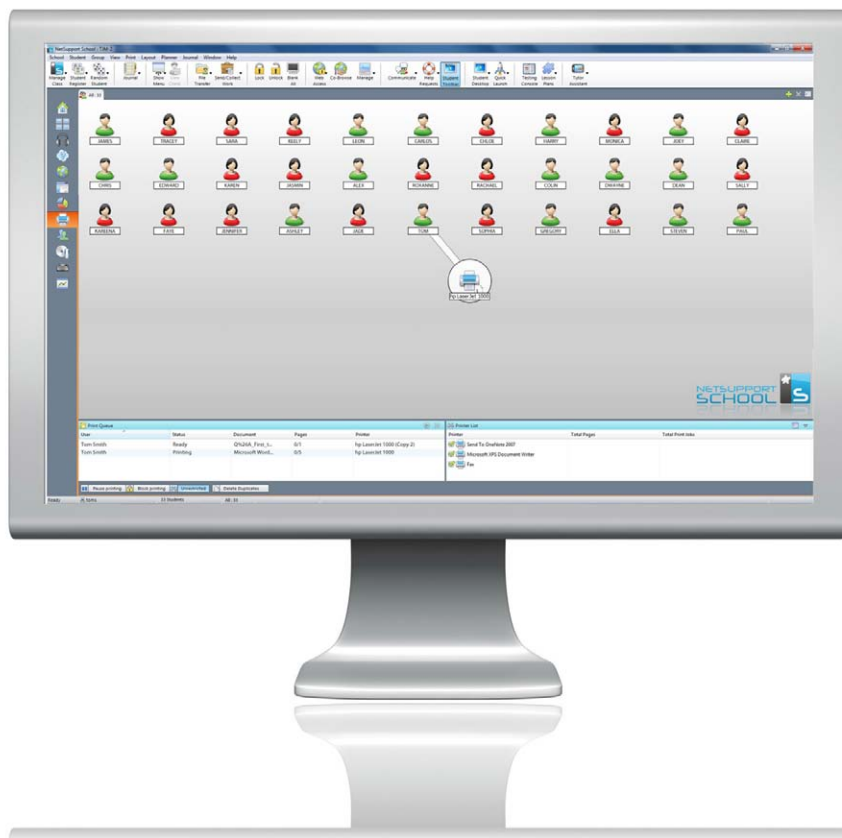
It's great to be able to monitor the students' PCs with an overview of the whole class. Also, if I see that they're doing something particularly well, then I can capture that screen and save it for later reference.

The students are all here now and it's time to begin the lesson. Some are having a quick surf on the internet, so I'll lock their screens to get their attention and let them know the lesson is starting.

Lock screens
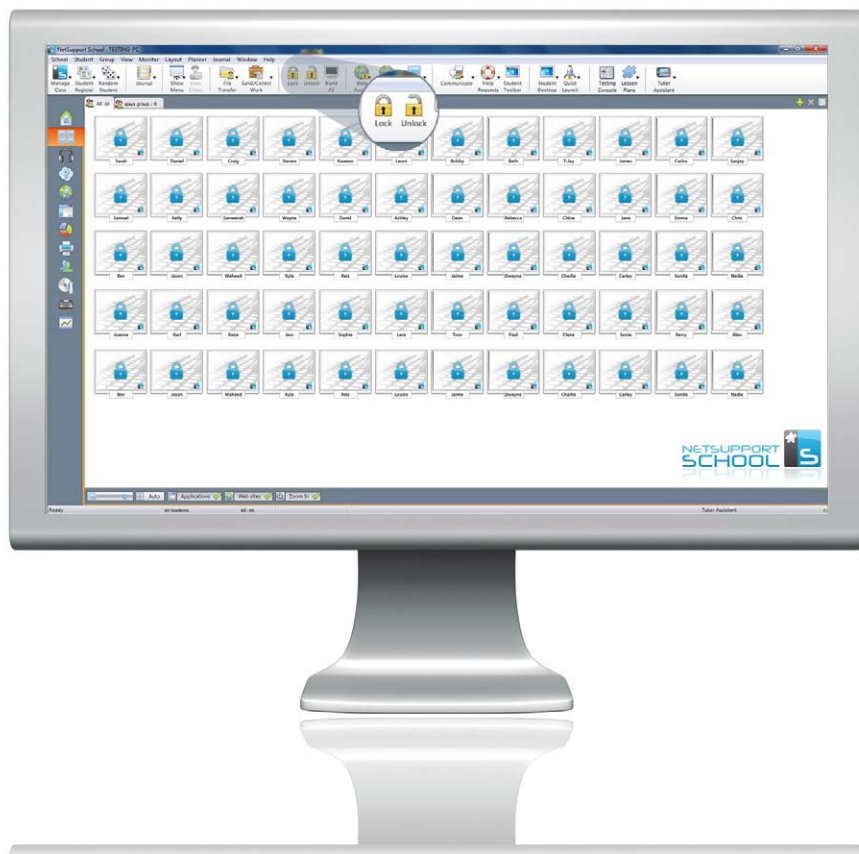
Then I'll prompt them to register from the icon on the toolbar. I can save the register as a file for our records so that I know who was in class today.

Our first activity is web-based research. First of all I'll guide my students to do research on approved websites, first showing them what to do, and then ask them to carry on individually.

I'll start by clicking on the "Co-browse" icon on the top toolbar to open up the co-browse window. Now whatever I do in this window is mirrored on the students' machines. You can bookmark websites just as in any browser – and mark websites as approved or restricted. It's a great way to ensure the students can all see the example you're giving.
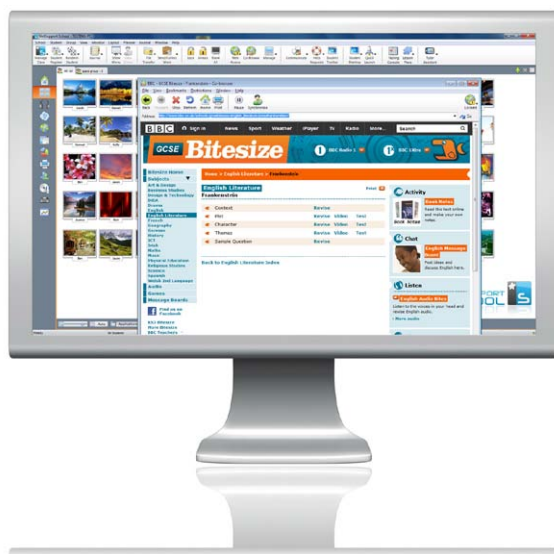

Now I close down the co-browse webpage on the student screens so they can do their own research.

Teachers are always conscious of keeping students safe online. NetSupport School makes this even easier for us by incorporating an internet safe search feature. You can't see it running, but it overrides the search settings for most leading search engines and prevents inappropriate content being returned within search results, so it helps prevent any of us (teachers too!) from displaying any unsuitable websites on our screens or to the class.

Co-browse

The students are now going to research their prose writing task online. I've selected some approved websites for them to use. I can see from the thumbnails which websites they're looking at.
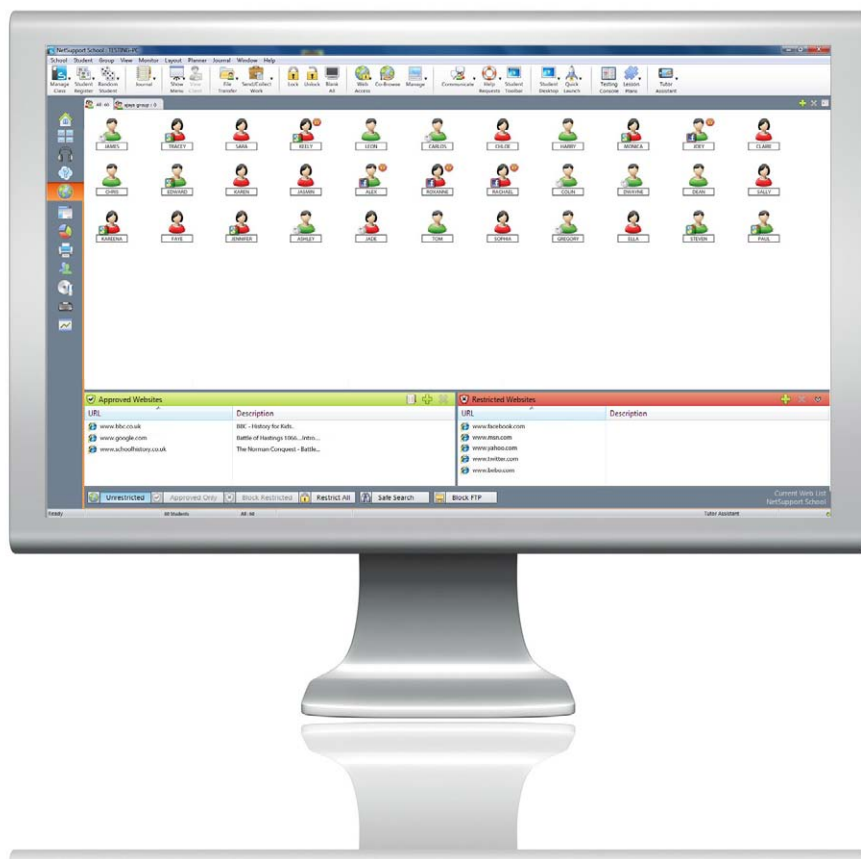
For the next task, each student needs a source file, which I can easily hand out to them via NetSupport School.
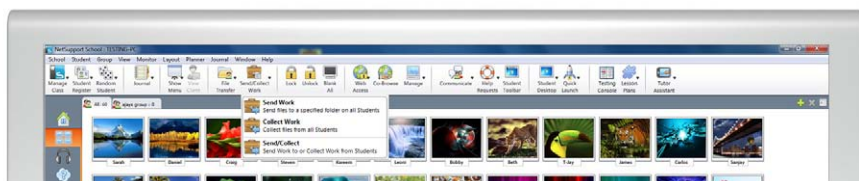
They will each write a piece of prose featuring targeted keywords to show that they've understood and can apply what they've learned.

As the students complete their task, NetSupport School shows me each time they use a targeted keyword from the topic.

Send and collect files
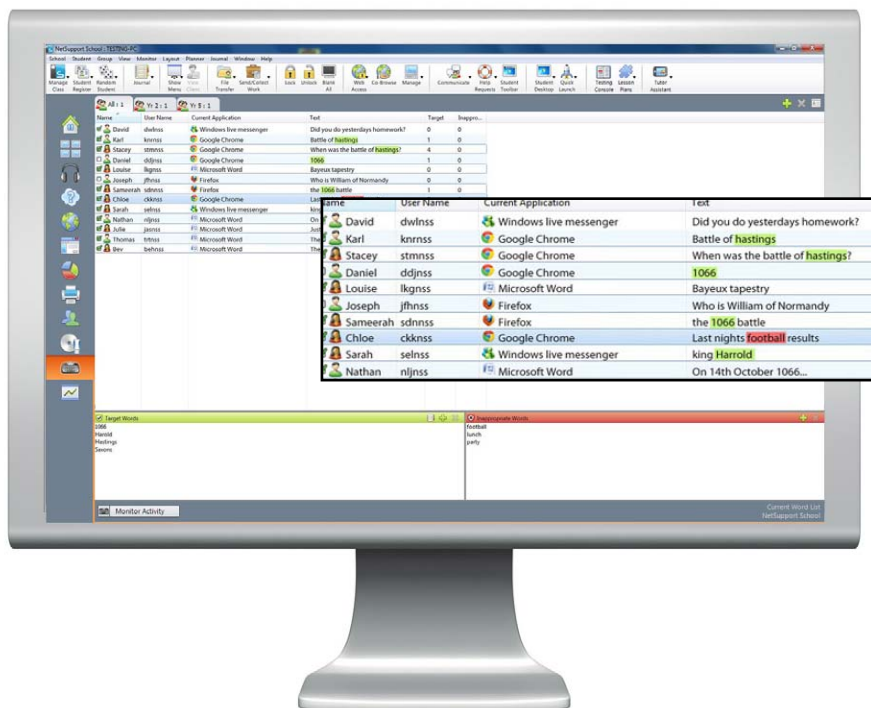
When the students have finished the exercise, I can collect the files back in just as easily as I handed them out.

I can also distribute files to multiple students in a single handy action, by dragging and dropping them to the correct areas.

This is a quick, easy way to ensure the students have all the resources they need, and is simple to do.
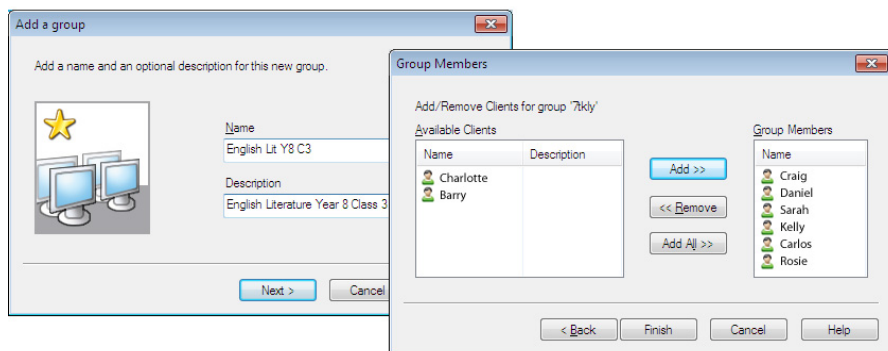

The next task is for the students to work in groups. I get their immediate attention by locking each student's mouse and keyboard while I explain what they need to do.

One student from each group will be nominated as the group leader. This student can then perform tasks for their group that normally only the teacher would be able to do, such as annotating and showing files or videos to the other members of the group. This encourages students' leadership skills and helps them all to work together as a team.

As the groups carry on with the task, I'll tell you a little more about the Group Leader function of NetSupport School.

Although there are different tasks going on simultaneously, with NetSupport School, it's easy to see what each group is working on. Today I've divided the class into four groups and arranged them as tabs on my screen for easy monitoring.
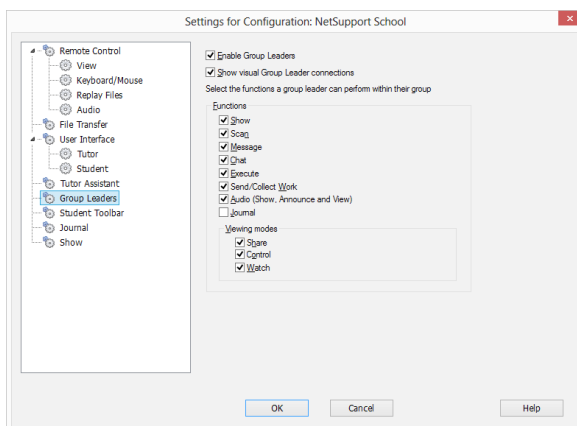

If at any time I feel a group leader student is struggling, I can suspend their leader status while I step in to help – and then restore it afterwards.

Group leader
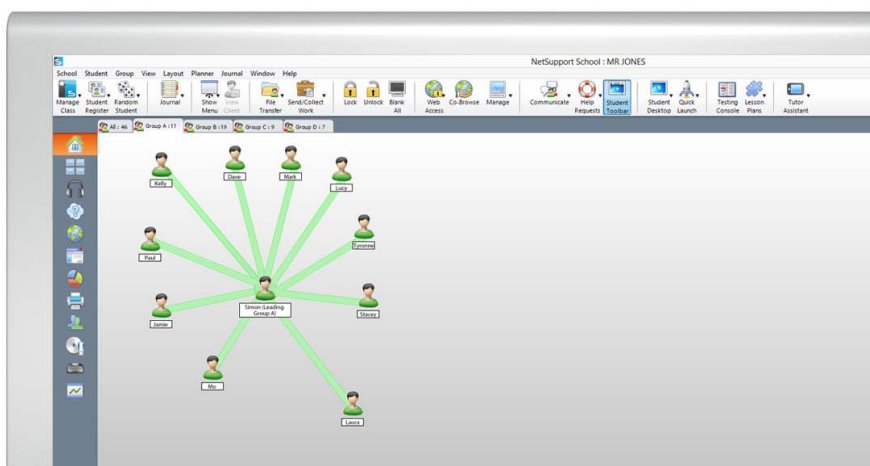
Now the student groups have all finished their work, I can exhibit each finished piece on the students' screens so everyone can see it, as the groups explain what they've done.

To help with monitoring students in group activities, or just in general, the NetSupport Tutor Assistant for tablet devices gives us mobility, allowing us to simultaneously move between student groups and check the progress of the entire class as we walk around the classroom. From our tablets, we

can monitor application and internet use, send messages and instructions to the class – plus log off all of the machines at the end of the lesson.
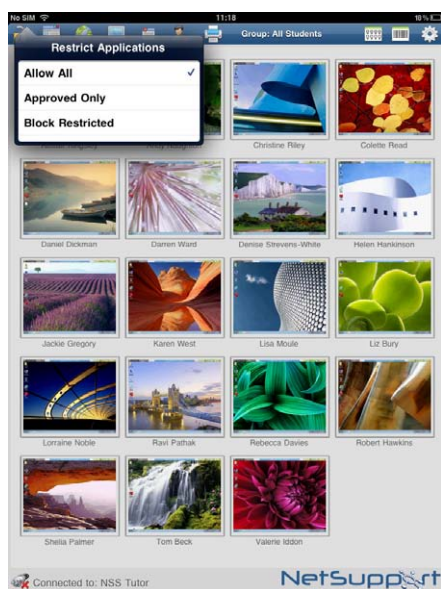
I've noticed that exhibiting work on each student's screen - as opposed to getting them all to look at a central point at the front of the class - has had a positive effect on the pupils' attention spans.

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Before, there would always be one or two students who were not paying attention fully. Now, they're looking at their own screens and are much more engaged with what's going on in the lesson. I'm sure it helps them to retain more information as well.

Lesson 2:
I've discovered that my colleague Mr Brown has had a plumbing emergency at home this morning, and I will be covering his maths lesson. Not my favourite subject! Luckily, Mr Brown has already prepared a lesson using the NetSupport School lesson planner that sums up a topic he has already worked on with the class.

So this morning, the students will complete a timed test. They'll need images, websites and files to refer to, so I'll upload these to the student resources area and they can access them via the student toolbar.

Student resources
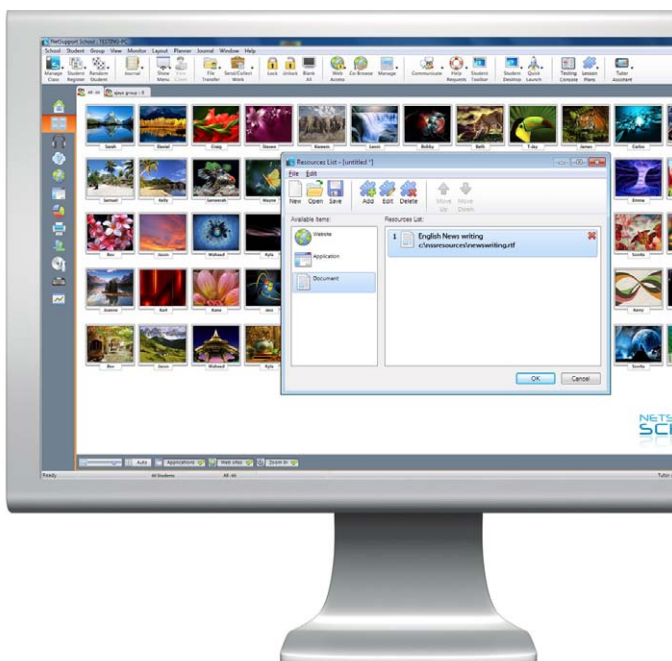
I'll need to ensure the use of certain applications is restricted before starting the test. It's easy to do this with NetSupport School: simply add them to the list of Restricted Applications and they won't be available for the students to use. In my case, I have pre-defined lists I can load before every class, so I don't have to start from scratch each time.

This feature is also handy for other class activities as it ensures that the students don't get distracted by applications they shouldn't be using as part of the lesson.

Restrict applications

Mr Brown has created the test in the NetSupport School Test Designer. This is a great way to set test questions and have them automatically marked so that the students can get immediate feedback and don't have to wait for their results.

The questions can be set in a variety of formats - multiple choice, labelling an image, true or false, ordering items – which is great, as the variety of approaches complements the pupils' different learning styles.

As the students progress, I can see in real time how they're getting on via the testing console:

Test designer
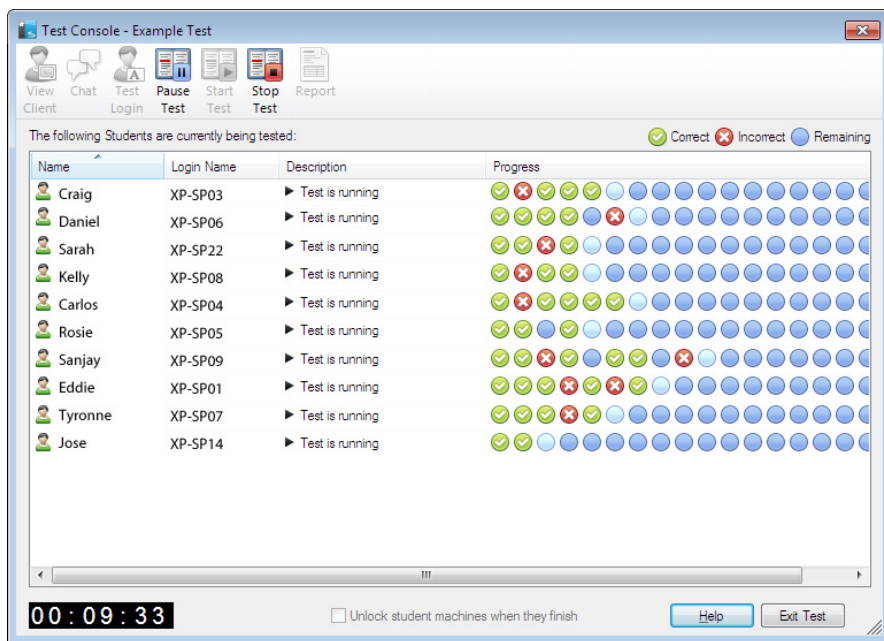
Marking is easy! We're able to set the grading level so if, for example, all marks above 75 per cent are an A grade, that will be allocated automatically.

The testing console will automatically mark the tests, so the results are available to the students straight afterwards and they can see how they've done, which means no more waiting until next lesson for marked papers to come back.

Testing console

Straight after the test, the teacher can also show all the correct answers to the class. This way the students can see straight away what they answered correctly – and learn from the answers they got wrong. And because there's no time delay while the teacher takes the test papers away to mark, the learning process is much more immediate and effective as everything is fresh in the students' minds.
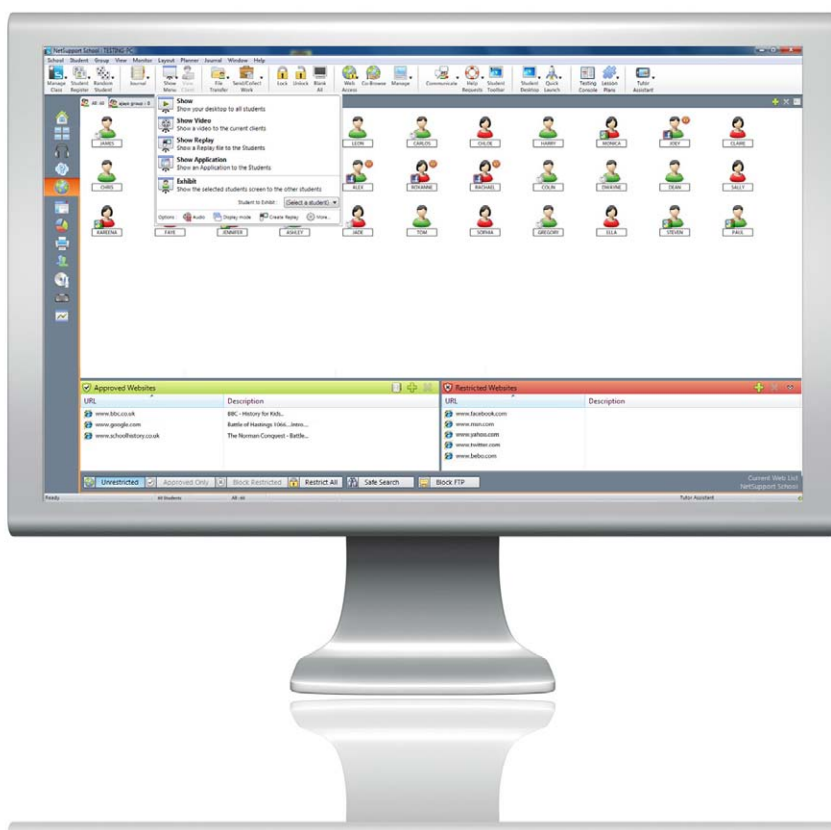
Testing console

Mr Brown has shared his test in the NetSupport School Online Resource Centre. This is a really handy free online resource that teachers everywhere using NetSupport School can use to share curriculum content and resources. We can upload our own tests for other teachers to use or use ones that other teachers have created.

Lesson 3:

My next lesson is German. Firstly, I'm going to show a video on all the students' screens for a conversation exercise afterwards.

To show them the video I simply go to the "Show" menu and select "Show Video".

Whilst this is playing, I can use annotations to highlight certain areas to the class if I need to.

Show video

Next is an online-led interactive speaking exercise where students practice comprehension and speaking.

With NetSupport School, I can monitor visually and aurally what students are listening to through their headphones or what's being said into their microphones. Their student toolbar shows them when I'm listening in!

I can listen and help students out with the two-way chat facility without interrupting the rest of the class, so I can step in and correct pronunciation if I need to.

Being able to record a student's microphone feed is a great feature. If I hear a great answer from a particular student, I can record it. NetSupport School is clever in that when I click to record

the student, the software has already retrospectively stored the last 30 seconds of what has been said and ensures that the great answer I've just heard has been stored. I can then replay this answer to the other students in their headsets.

The audio monitoring feature also allows me to mute or restrict the volume of the students' headphones or microphones – just in case anyone is getting a little over-enthusiastic...

And now for one of my favourite features! Many schools find that whiteboards are great way of making learning visual for the students – and we all know how valuable that is. NetSupport School has a virtual whiteboard within it, so there's no disruption whilst you move from using NetSupport School to a standalone whiteboard and back again: it's all here and ready to use, just a few clicks away.

It works in exactly the same way as a standalone whiteboard but has the benefit for students that it can be displayed directly on the PC screen in front of them.

I can quickly and easily start up the whiteboard with what I want to show to the students – and then launch it on all the class machines.

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Virtual whiteboard
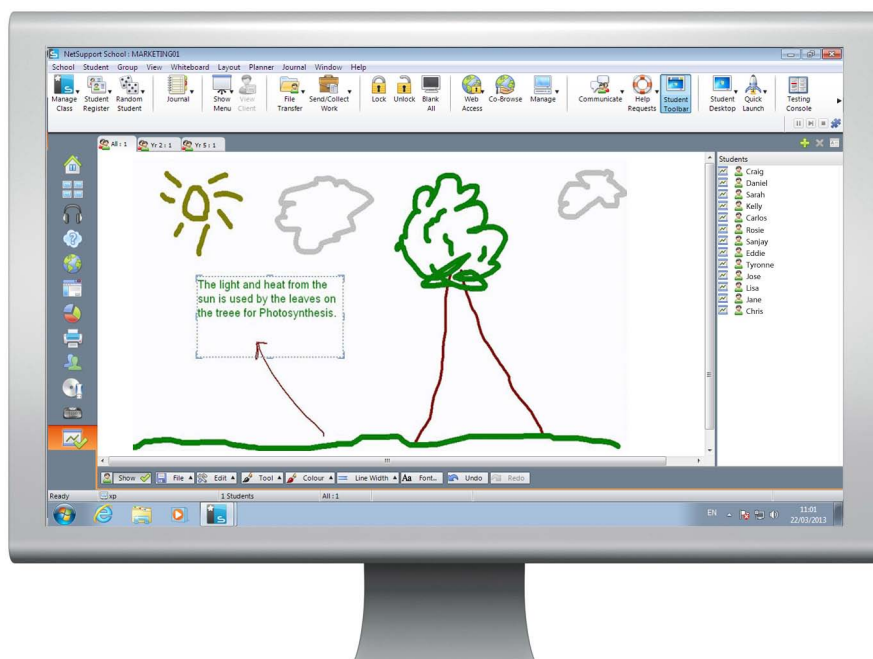
First, I'll load the image we're going to talk about. I simply click on the whiteboard tab on the left to launch the virtual whiteboard.

And then I select the "File" button to select and load my chosen image.

I make sure the students all have this on their screens by checking that the "Show" option is ticked. Easy!

Any annotations I use from that point onwards are automatically displayed on the students' screens.

Virtual whiteboard

The software also lets me display two students' work side by side for discussion, which is very handy for constructive discussion and developing their critiquing skills.

And I can add the whiteboard contents to the Student Journal for later reference in just a couple of clicks.
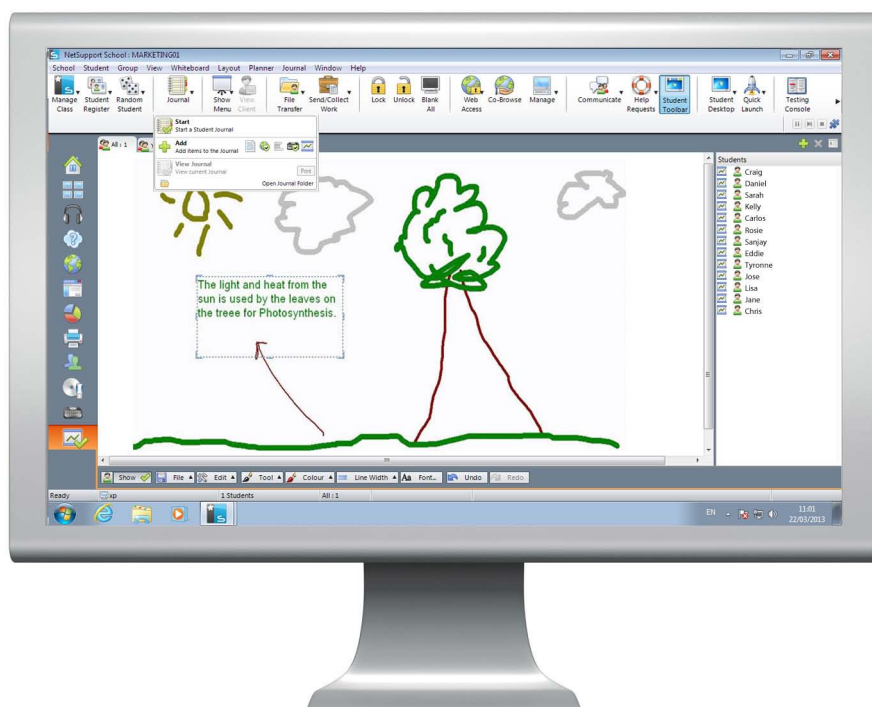
The student journal is a fantastic resource for students and teachers alike. For me, it provides a digital record for when I teach the same course next year. And for the students? Well, for the ones who are absent for a particular lesson, I immediately have a document detailing everything we covered in the lesson to give to them, so they don't miss out on any vital information or topics.

Student journal

The students want to print what we've discussed on the whiteboard for their project work.

NetSupport School has a really handy Print Management feature which means I can control how the students print. They can't print anything without my authorisation, and I can limit the number of pages each student prints, which is great for eliminating unnecessary pages being printed off and for saving ink and paper.

Print management

For the end of day plenary, I want to see how well the students understand the new grammar rules I have introduced to them today, so I'm going to give them some instant survey questions. This is a handy, interactive way of engaging students and getting their instant feedback.

I send the class a question and some pre-defined responses that students click on to answer. The results are shown on the tutor screen as an overall percentage, and by individual student. I can then show these to the class as a pie chart so they can see how well they've done as a group.

It's also handy to run a survey mid-lesson because then I can group the students by their responses; setting work for those who have understood the topic, whilst going over the concepts in more detail for those who are struggling.

To add variety and provide opportunities to help pupils to retain information in different ways, new NetSupport School v11 has added a unique Question and Answer module that allows us to test what pupils have learned during the lesson – but in a variety of interactive ways.

Instant survey
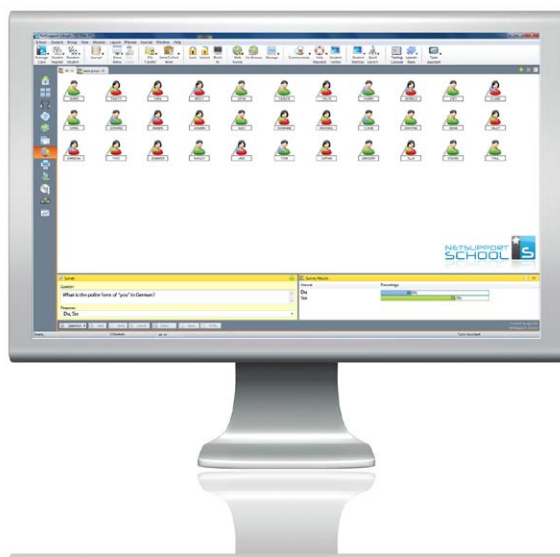
It's based around current teaching practices for the continual assessment of learning and it gives us the option to work in several ways, creating variety for optimum engagement. For instance, I ask my class a question about what we have learned in the lesson. I can ask for them to indicate whether they know the answer on their keyboard – and I will ask the quickest student for their answer verbally. If that student's answer is wrong, I can choose to "bounce" the question to another student in the class and award points when the correct answer is reached. Or, just to mix things up a bit, I can randomly select students to give an answer.

This feature is also great for encouraging team work, as groups can compete against each other. And because I can instantly show the answers means that sometimes the pupils start cheering!

Question and Answer module
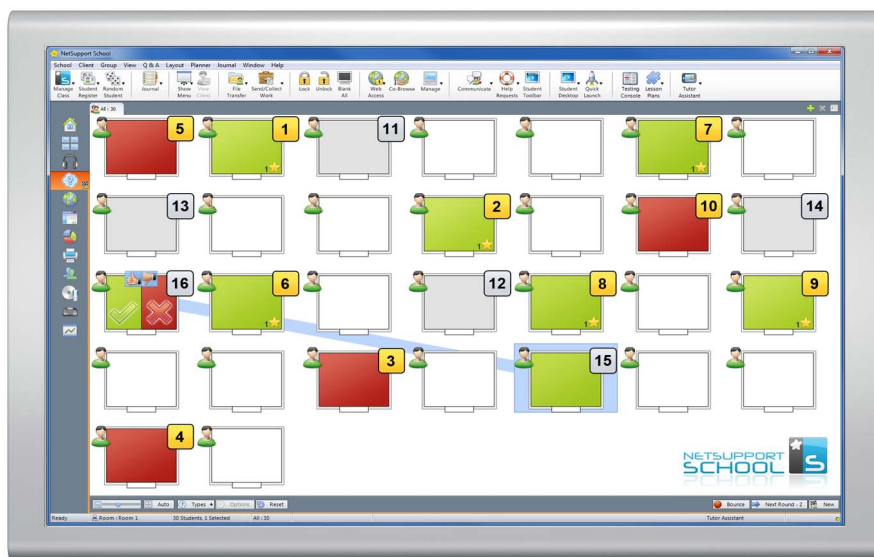
What Teachers think of NetSupport School

I find NetSupport School invaluable in helping me with all aspects of teaching: preparation of lessons, teaching, monitoring and engaging the students with activities. It not only helps the lessons themselves to become more organised, but by using the Lesson Planner, it ensures I have everything prepared and in one place, ready to go.

I especially like the fact that the nature of NetSupport School encourages shy students to participate when they may otherwise be reluctant to do so. And the interactive nature of the software appeals to all of the four learning styles, so there really is something for every student here!

Hello! I'm Paul. I'm 12 years old and our school has NetSupport School.

I'm going to show you how we use it in our first lesson: English.

When we get to class, the NSS Student toolbar is on the screen. It shows that we're in Miss Smith's class in Room 3.

Some teachers set it to show how long there is until the end of the lesson even when we've only just arrived!

Our lesson objectives are shown too; it's good to see what we'll be doing today.

Wahey! There's time to fit in a quick bit of web surfing before lesson begins!

Oops, Miss Smith has locked my keyboard and mouse. That means the lesson is starting.

Lock keyboard
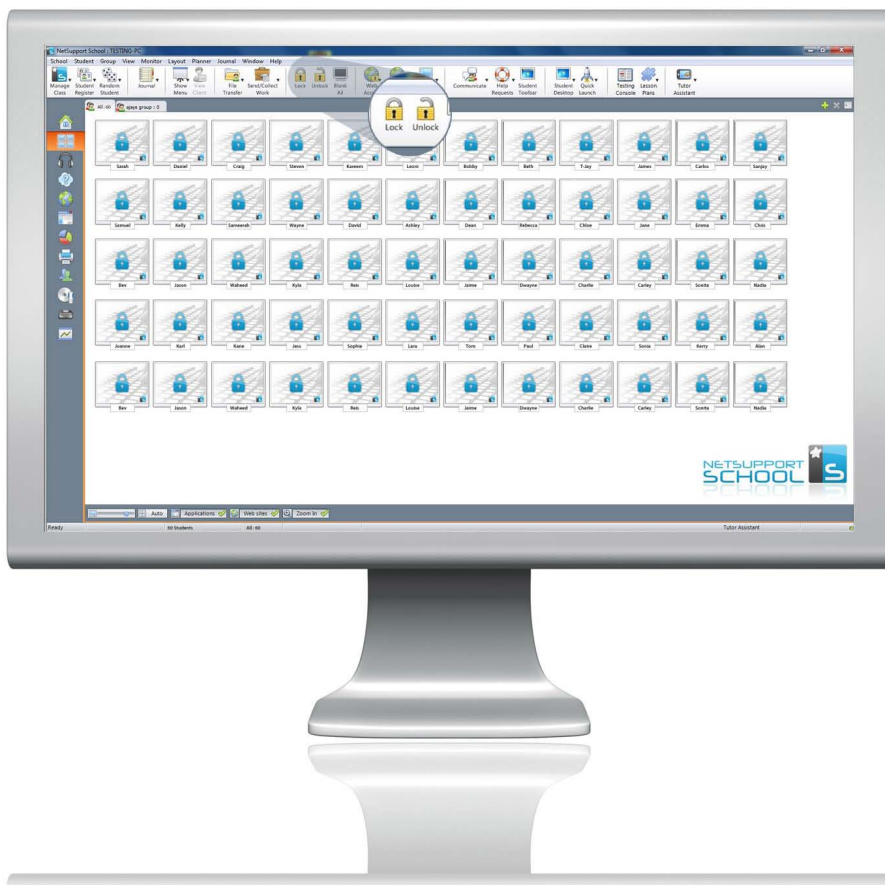
It's time for Registration. Miss Smith sends us the Registration prompt which we fill in with our names so she knows who's in class today.

In some lessons the teacher changes this box to ask for extra information like house name, curriculum group and so on.

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First, we're going to do some web research about writing news. Miss Smith shows us what to look for online. She goes online on her own screen and shows it to us on ours.

It's quite clever, because you can see exactly what she does and you don't miss anything.

When she's finished explaining what we need to do, she takes her screen off ours, but we can still be left with access to just the pages she has shown us.

Internet co-browse

Now we need to do some of our own research. Miss Smith has chosen the websites we need to use, and these are shown on our toolbar. One of them's the BBC news website.

We can go anywhere on this site (apart from the football pages – Miss Smith has blocked that because we're supposed to be doing English), but the software won't let us go to any other sites.

I know, because I've tried it!
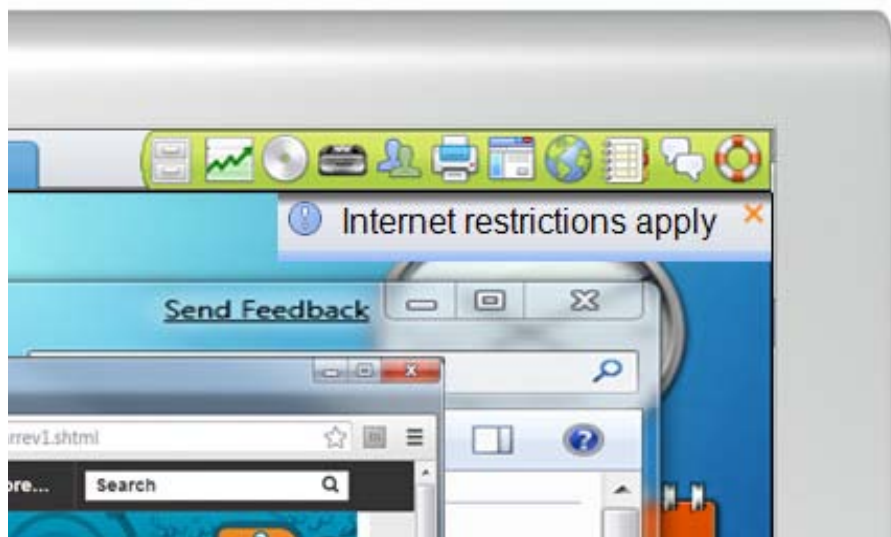
Miss Smith sometimes uses access to the internet as a reward and lets us have 10 minutes further reading time when we've finished our class work. When she does this, there's a clock that counts down the time, so we always know how long we have left to read.

Monitored web browsing

Back to the lesson. Now we need to write a piece of our own to bring together what we've just learned.

Miss Smith has asked us to include some key words. She can check what we're typing as we go along – and we can see she's doing this from our toolbar. (She can't see any of our passwords though.)

Keyboard activity is being monitored

Send Feedback
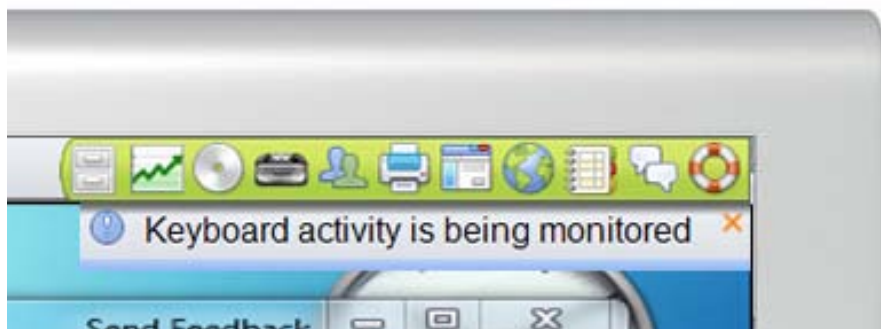
This is what Miss Smith sees on her screen as we type...

There are aliens on planets like Jupiter and they watch us on earth

The solar system is made up of lots of planets and Neptune is one

Aliens live on Mars and

Is Neptune the one with rings around it?

another hot planet is mercury, it is near the sun

Miss Smith is walking around the classroom as we all get writing. I get a bit stuck and need to ask for help.

I don't really want to put my hand up, so I click for help on my NSS student toolbar, which turns it from blue to orange, like this...

Miss Smith will see this when she passes my desk and will stop to answer my question.

If the teacher is sitting at the front of the classroom when I click for help, she will still see from her own class monitoring screen that I need to ask a question, as the thumbnail view of my PC on her screen will show up with an orange border.

So we never have to worry that the teacher won't see us.

For me, this is a really good feature of using NetSupport School, because I feel self-conscious about putting my hand up and asking things in front of everyone else in the class.

Ask for assistance from student toolbar

Now it's time to split into groups. I'm in a group with five others. Miss Smith has said I'm the group leader today and that means I can lead our team's work. It's a bit scary at first, but we all get to be the leader at some point, and it gets easier each time we do it.
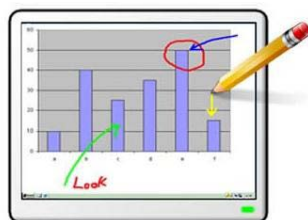
The best bit about being the leader is that I can show my screen to the other students and use the annotation tools if I need to. Cool!

For some of our projects, splitting off into groups is made easier when we use our Android tablets.

We can go into a different room or area to plan our work but still be connected to the teacher – so we can still ask questions if we need to, and the teacher can ask us things as well.

That's another good thing about NetSupport School: it lets us use PCs, tablets and Chromebooks, so we all get used to using all kinds of different technology.
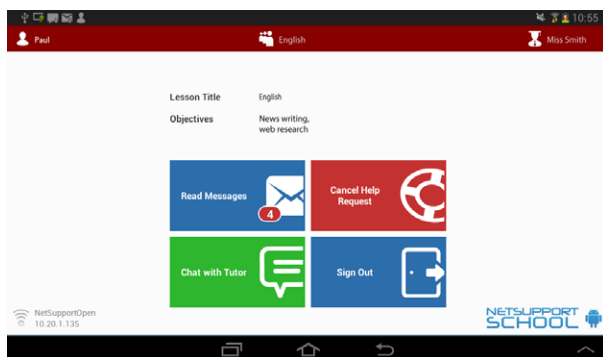
I've just thought of a great picture that I want to include in our work. It's in my personal folder... no, actually it's on my memory stick.

NetSupport School shows Miss Smith I've inserted a USB memory stick into the PC, and she'll need to authorise me to access it.

It's the same with printing - Miss Smith can authorise or restrict what we print. We can always see what restrictions are in place on the Student toolbar.

In fact, if the teachers put any controls or restrictions in place - like limits on the websites we can use, or if there are certain programs we're not allowed to use (for example, if we're doing a test) - we can see this straight away on our toolbar.

This way, we always know what we can and can't do, and we don't spend lots of time trying to print if the teacher has applied printing restrictions or something like that.

When we've finished, Miss Smith exhibits all the groups' work on everyone's screen while we explain to the class about the work we've done.

Miss Smith says our group's work is really good! We used to get stars on our NSS toolbar when we were in Year 4 or 5 and had done good work, like this:

Of course, we're waaay too mature for this now. :)

Exhibit work / Visual rewards

A great new thing in NetSupport School 11 is Question and Answer mode, which is a bit like a TV game show. Teachers can use it to check how we're learning and ask us questions individually or in teams. The best one is where we work in teams and can see a display of our scores on screen. It's really good because you can see when your answer has made a difference to the overall score – and when the scores are close, everybody wants to answer!

Some of the other groups have some good ideas too. Miss Smith has added them all to our Student Journals. Have we told you what that is?
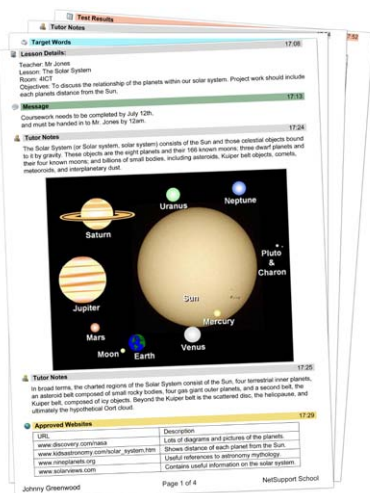
The Student Journal is a bit of the software that makes a record of what we're learning. For today's lesson, Miss Smith has made a journal for all of us. It tells us all the details of the class – the teacher, the lesson, the date – and she adds all the notes, pictures and web links that we've used as we go through the lesson. If we like, we can put our own notes in of things we want to look at later on too.

The Student Journal is great for helping me with my homework, especially because all the websites we've used in class are listed on there as links and I don't have to write them all down! It also helps me to remember what we've done in class and what we talked about.

My Student Journal is above. It's a collection of information from the teacher, the class and my own personal notes.

What we think of NetSupport School!

We like NetSupport School because it's cool! It makes lessons go more quickly because we're always doing something with it: the teacher is either showing us something or we're working with it and going online... It's just really good and it makes lessons fun.

I always have the notes from the student journal, so I can't forget anything we've done. And if someone is off sick, they don't miss anything because the teacher can give them the notes from the lesson.

I can't imagine using just textbooks in class now.

Hi! I'm Andy and I'm a school ICT technician. We've been using NetSupport School here for a while now and I want to tell you how it works for us...

Most people think of classroom management software as being just for the benefit of the students and the teachers. Most of the time, they're right. It is usually the case – and we technicians only get to be involved when something goes wrong with it!

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With NetSupport School though, they've created a unique feature specifically for ICT technicians: the Tech Console. It's great that finally a manufacturer recognises that technicians have an important part to play in keeping all of the school's computers running effectively and ready for the teachers to use in their lessons. And because we can do the majority of the school's PC maintenance through the NetSupport School Tech Console interface, it means we can streamline the total number of software packages we need to use.
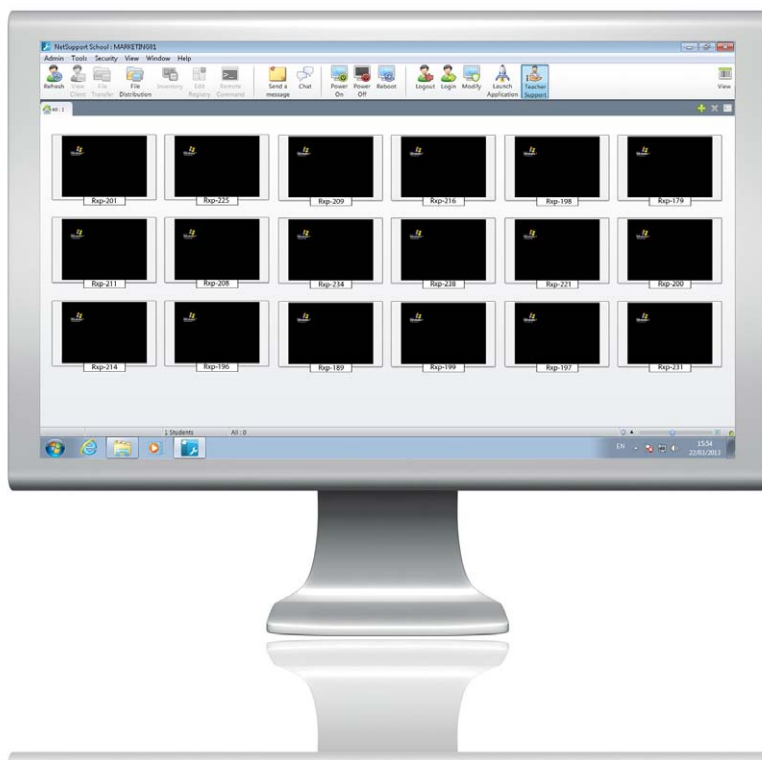
From the comfort of the Tech Console we can check on all the school's PCs. We can view them clearly on the screen and change the thumbnail layouts to reflect the arrangement of PCs according to the lab or classroom.

We can also see at a glance all the PCs on the network and group all the computers by classroom or location if we want to. It's also easy to see which students and teacher PCs are taking part in an active class. It's great to be able to monitor all the PCs this way and keep a running check that they're all working as they should be.

Screen layout
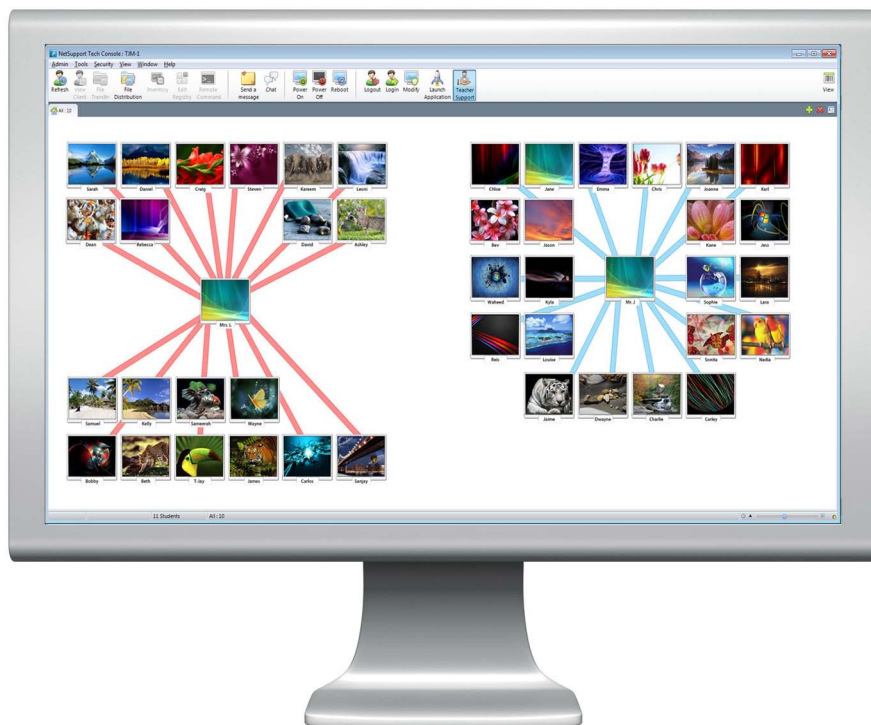
Another great feature of NetSupport School's Tech Console is that we can Power on, Power off, Reboot and Login to PCs remotely. So if any are left powered on at the end of the day, we can simply shut them down - regardless of where they're located - and do our bit towards the school's energy conservation initiative.

Remote power on/power off

Remote functions are where the Tech Console excels. We can take full remote control of any PC if required, as well as review all the client security settings. And it's a great way to be able to fix PCs quickly without physically having to visit each classroom.

I can view the status of all the teacher and student PCs in the school at a glance as a list or as thumbnail images – and if I view a PC in Report Mode, I can instantly see more information such as the user name, IP address and current applications and websites running on that particular machine.

Remote control
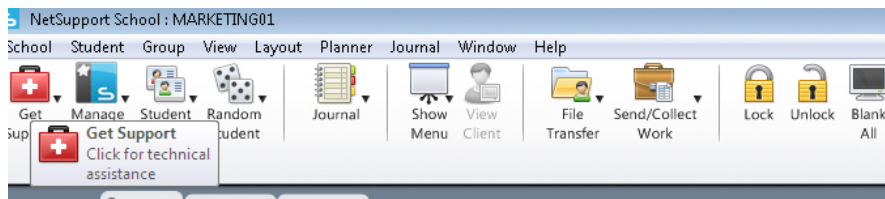
If a teacher finds they need technical help during a lesson, they can alert us by clicking on the "Get Support" button on their console and we can then look at the issue remotely. This is really handy for the teacher as they don't need to leave the classroom to ask for help, and handy for us too as we can often solve the problem quickly and easily by remote control with minimum fuss and minimum lesson disruption for the students.

Teacher assist

We can also chat with a teacher or student online. This can really help save time with problem solving, as we can ask for more details of what has gone wrong which helps us fix it and move on to sorting out the next one!
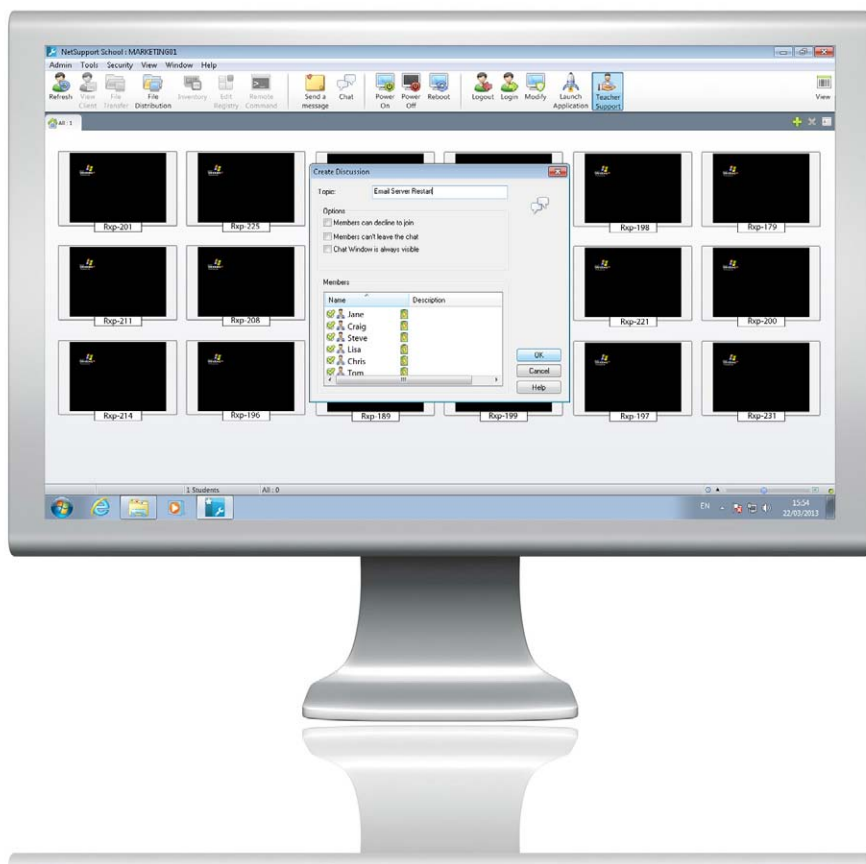
We can also send messages to all PC users. Let's say we need to announce that the email server will be down for 10 minutes: we can easily broadcast that message to all logged on users. There are even pre-set messages that we can send. This means that all logged-on PC users see it instantly, whatever they might be doing on their PC at the time. We find it's more effective than sending an email (which some of the teachers admit they never read anyway!)
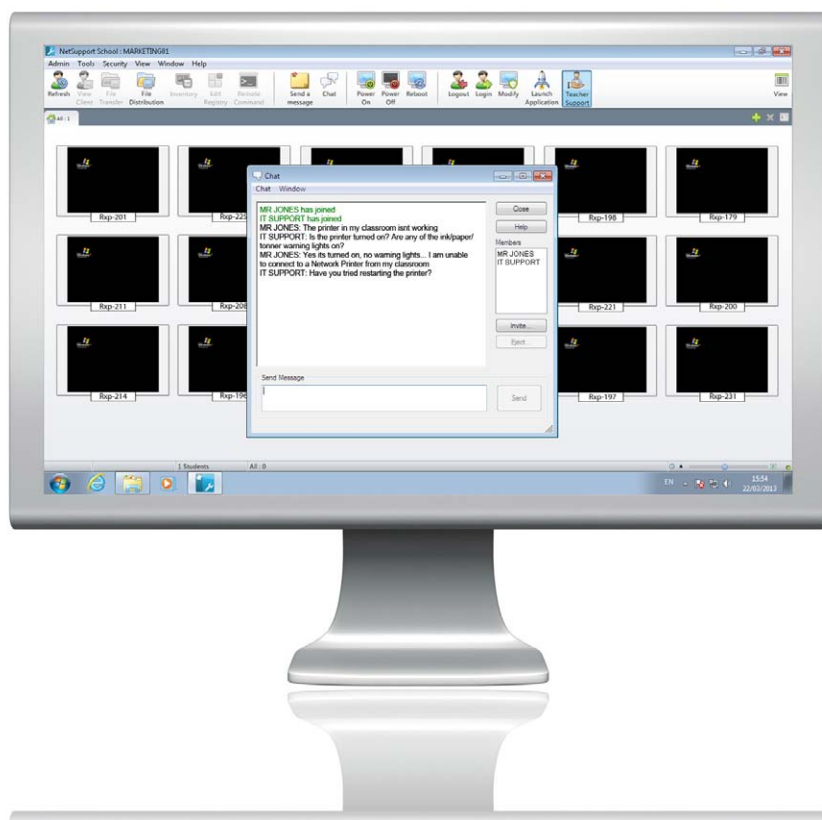
It's great to be able to generate a full hardware or software inventory for a selected PC – you can't do that from most other classroom management software packages! We use these to investigate issues in greater depth and ensure that every one of our school's PCs is kept up to date and running smoothly.

Hardware/Software inventory
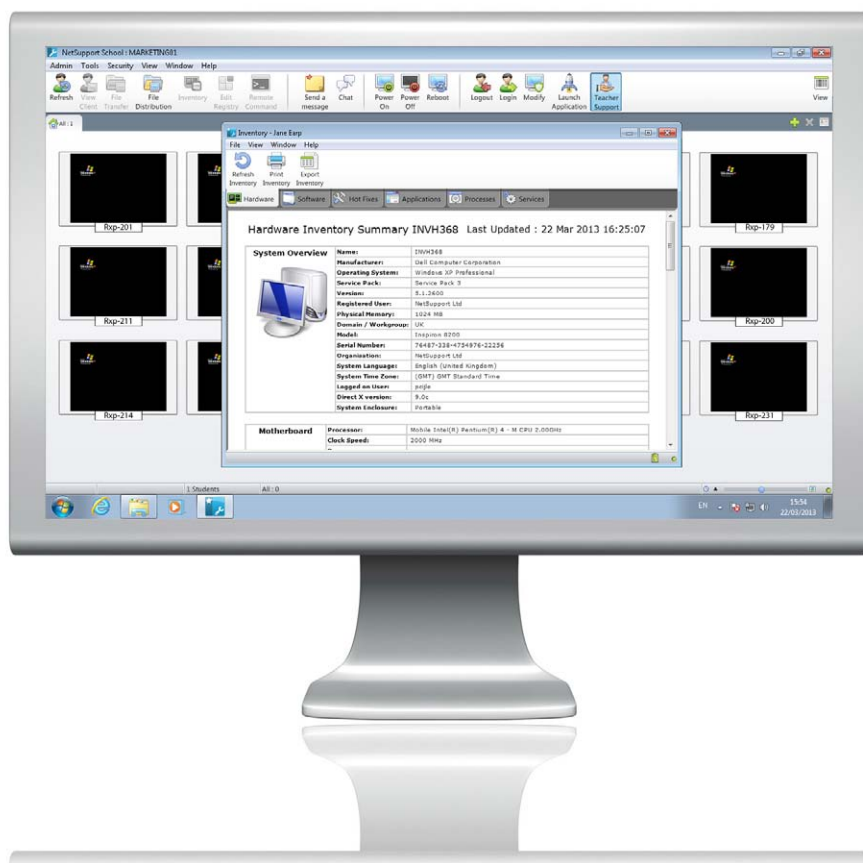
When we're providing remote support for a teacher or student on more complex issues, sometimes we need to see the services, processes and applications running on each PC. We can see and control these through the NetSupport School Tech Console, as well as see what hotfixes have been applied to each machine.
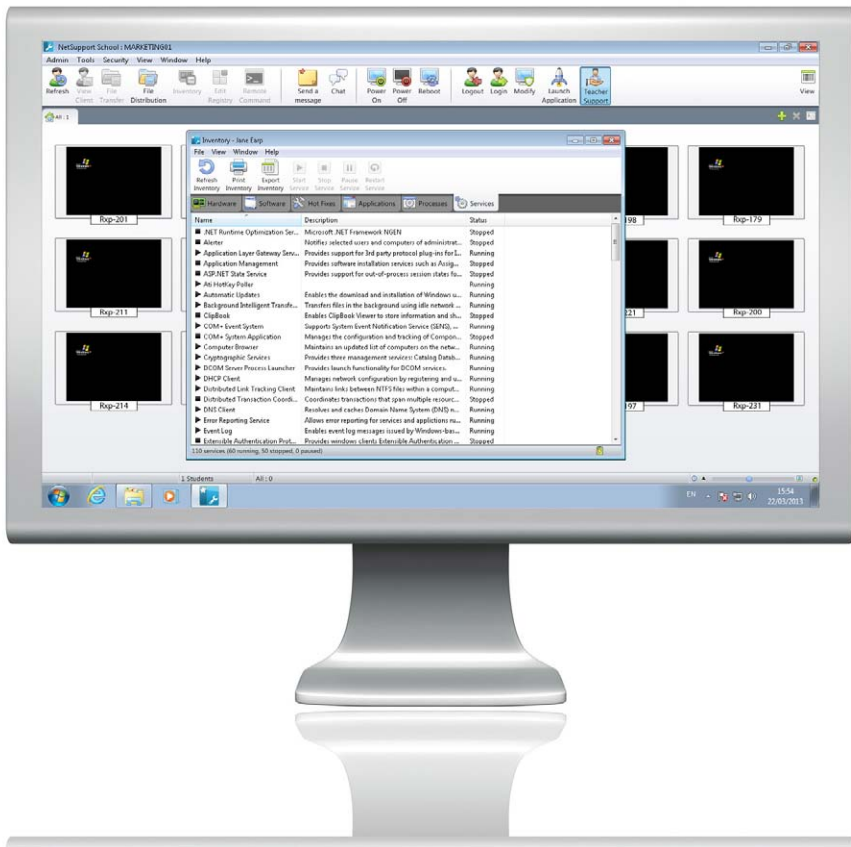
Our school's policy is to allow students access to the internet in a designated lab over lunchtime. Of course, certain sites are permanently blocked, but in the interest of developing responsibility, the students are allowed some degree of freedom.

We can use the Tech Console to monitor their activity online, and also monitor the applications they're using. If there's any hint of students getting up to something they shouldn't, (oh yes, we can see any applications running in the background too!) NetSupport School lets us close and kill applications remotely as well as shut down any dodgy web pages.

Web/Application monitoring

One of my favourite features of the NetSupport School Tech Console is its file transfer and distribution functionality - and with new NSS version 11, thanks to User Datagram Protocol (UDP), this is 10 times faster than before! When it comes to updating software, we can simply deliver files in a single action to all the computers we select, copy them to the desktops and then remote control in to install them. As you can imagine, it's much, much better than having to visit each one individually.
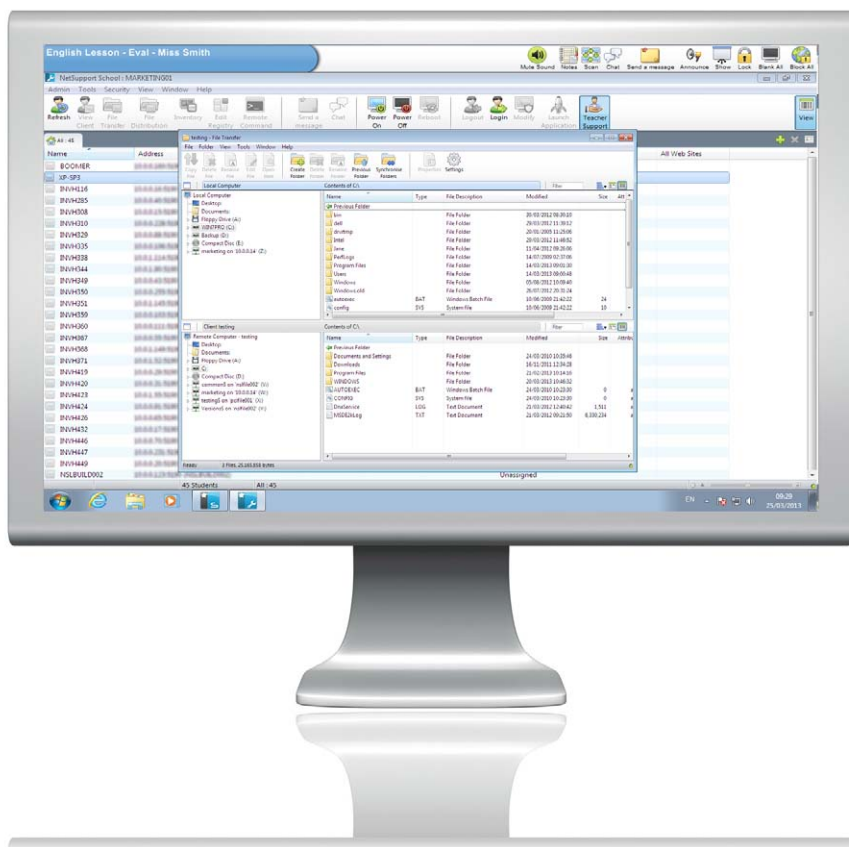
Another handy feature of NetSupport School is that we can see the USB memory stick status on all of the classroom machines. Sometimes the pupils bring in games from home and upload them at school, but it's against school policy to do this. Some still try it though, but Netsupport School's monitoring feature means we can easily spot who it is and take appropriate action.

It's also handy to see who's left their USB stick in the PC at the end of the day after they've saved their coursework. It's easy to see who was sitting where on the NetSupport School monitoring screen, so we can recover the sticks and hand them back to their owners the following day.

A really useful feature of NetSupport School 11 is that we can apply a school-wide set of internet and application restrictions that are "always on" without the need for a dedicated server. So, for example, if the school policy says that no pupil can play DVDs in school machines, we can set and apply that policy across the school. However, if a teacher needs the pupils to use DVDs in a particular lesson, they can allow the pupils access just for that session.
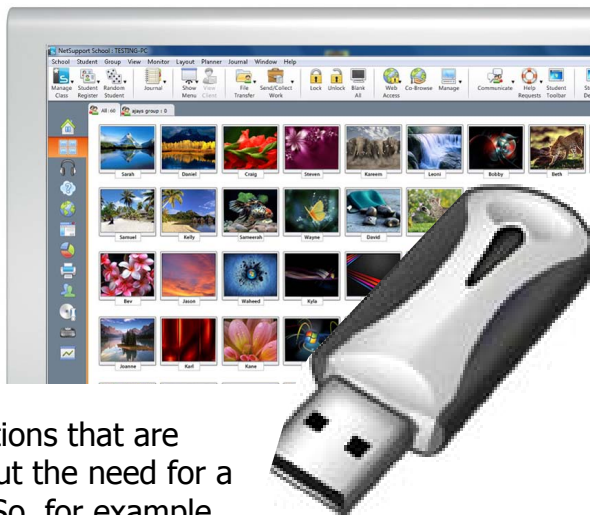
As the school's hardware requirements and setups evolve and change, we were concerned that we might have to move away from NetSupport School in the future. Not so! NetSupport School is really flexible and will work on all sorts of thin and zero computing setups including:

· Wyse Zero client
· NComputing
· Citrix
· MiniFrame SoftXpand, and
· Microsoft Terminal Services

So if your school is moving towards cost-saving technologies like these, you'll be fine: there won't be any compatibility issues with NetSupport School.
With ICT in schools becoming more and more varied, it's no surprise that our SLT wants to provide students with the opportunity to experience as many devices and platforms
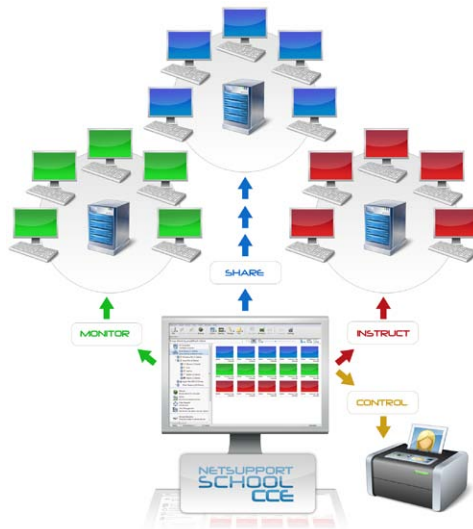
as possible. At the moment, they're planning to add some
Google Chromebooks and Android tablets to our ICT
inventory, which we can also support through new NetSupport
School v11.
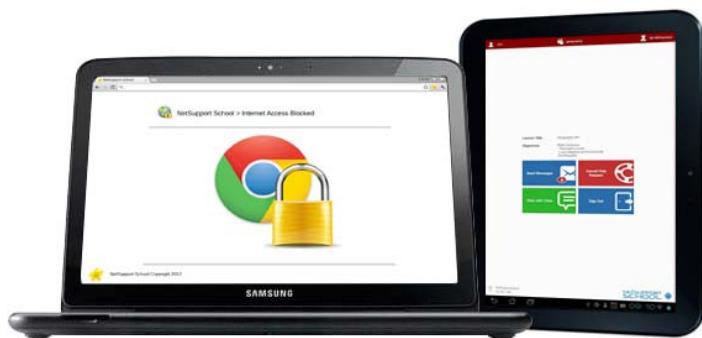
A recent development in schools is for students to bring in
their own mobile devices - such as laptops or netbooks - to
use wirelessly in class. This isn't a problem because as long as
the NetSupport Student component is installed, the student
can connect to and join the running class session, ensuring
that they don't miss out on a thing.

Chromebooks/Android tablets

If a school uses NetSupport School in a Terminal Services environment, pupils bringing in their own laptops can easily connect to a virtual session and join a NetSupport School class. Connections like this can also be controlled by Active Directory – like in our school – where pupils bringing in their own devices for the first time are directed to a webpage where they can download the software that they are required to use in school.

NetSupport School's set of security features ensures that it can only be used by the people authorised to do so - and in a way that adheres to school policies.
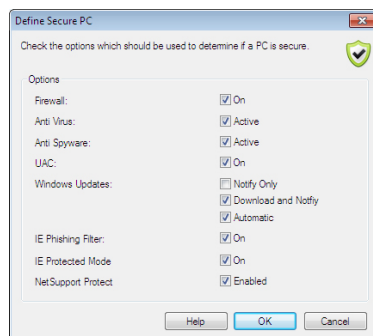
Configuration settings are protected, meaning that all settings and passwords can be stored centrally and automatically applied from Active Directory. The configuration file is stored on our central server, which means we can apply global settings for our school which are automatically applied to the tutor and student profiles.

Each teacher can also personalise their profile – setting the software options to reflect the way they want to work in NetSupport School.
They can then protect this with a password, so that every time they sign into their profile they get their own settings by default. So, for example, the web or printing restrictions they've applied will be there each time they log in, meaning they don't have to set them up from scratch for each class.

We can also configure NetSupport School through Active Directory policies to provide extra information for users. For example, today I created a policy to create a custom message on the teacher's screen when another tutor tries to connect to them or their class. This means that teachers are always aware of who is connected to them.

NetSupport School also employs security keys to create a self-contained network. This stops any potentially mischievous students from being able install a demonstration version of the tutor console to try to override the teacher and disrupt the class.

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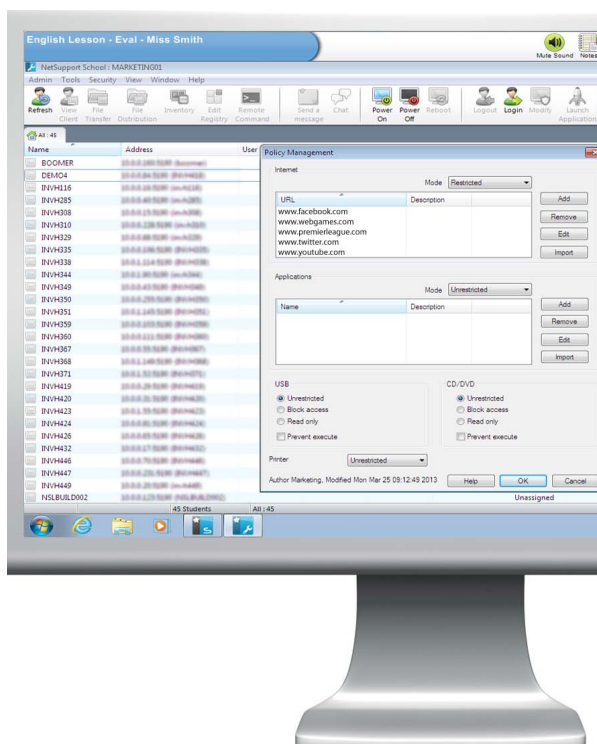
What Technicians think of NetSupport School!

We've found that NetSupport School is the ideal instruction and monitoring tool for our school, and the Tech Console really was the icing on the cake for us. The program is so easy to install and set up in just a few steps – it really set the tone for how easily the rest of it worked!

I think it has made the ICT Support department more efficient as we can solve so many problems remotely, meaning we have capacity to fit more in as result.

And that makes our Head Teacher very happy.