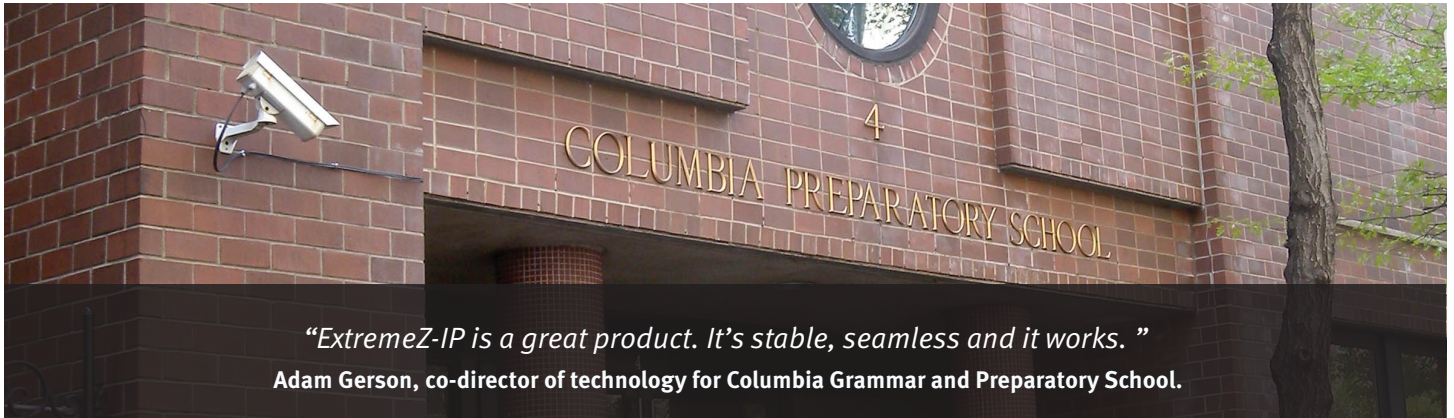


ExtremeZ-IP® Preserves School's Tradition of Excellence and Dramatically Improves Reliability



Challenge:

Ensure that switching operations to a Windows®-based server environment does not disrupt Mac® users

Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School in New York City, one of the oldest and most-respected primary and preparatory education institutions in the nation, prides itself on providing students with a comprehensive and challenging curriculum. Primary to this theme is technology—and the schools' embrace of computers in many aspects of student life is essential to its dynamic learning environment.

With a mission to prepare students to be forward-thinking leaders, it's essential that the computers of students and staff, and those in the school's computer labs, function without any glitches. However, this proved to be a challenge due to ongoing problems for the school's Apple® users in classrooms and labs, which were being managed with an Apple Xserve system. According to Adam Gerson, co-director of technology for Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School, under the old system, users had to endure server crashes and slow connections on an ongoing basis, and solving these problems consumed much of the IT department's time. His frustration is common among IT managers using Apple servers at enterprises with multiple operating systems under one roof. Though Apple vowed to continue support for its Xserve enterprise products even after it stopped producing them in January 2011, Gerson's team began considering other options.

They did not want to eschew Apple altogether as the school's 1200 students and 250-strong staff had loved the positive user experience they got from their Mac desktops and laptops. Gerson and his team ultimately decided to swap their Apple Xserve system for a Windows-based server solution. The change was not without concern, however—the goal was to reduce or eliminate server crashes, and they knew that integrating a Windows-based server with a largely-Mac-based user environment traditionally comes with its own set of challenges, ranging from problems accessing, editing and changing files to printer connection issues. Gerson had heard of a solution, GroupLogic's ExtremeZ-IP®, which was designed to prevent exactly these kinds of issues, so he decided to give it a try.

By deploying ExtremeZ-IP immediately upon transitioning from the Apple Xserve system to Windows-based servers, Gerson and his technology team circumvented any integration issues altogether. This ensured fluid, glitch-free access to the network for Mac and Windows users alike.

*Acronis® acquired GroupLogic and is now using the Acronis mobility solutions branding

Key Challenges:

Students and staff faced multiple problems, from server crashes to performance issues when accessing the school's former Apple Xserve system; to better support them alongside the school's many Mac users, the technology department replaced the Xserve system with Windowsbased servers in 2011, but needed to ensure Mac users would not face compatibility, performance or access issues.

Key Benefits:

- After ExtremeZ-IP's implementation on the campus network, Windows and Mac users alike finally had the same seamless access, editing and saving capabilities.
- All users are managed under one Active Directory umbrella.
- Performance degradation, which used to be a problem when multiple users accessed the network at once, is no longer an issue.

Organization Background

Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School is the oldest continuously-operating, nonsectarian school in the United States. With 1200 students and 250 faculty and staff, the school has one to three Mac desktop computers in every classroom, plus laptops and laptop carts—the network supports over 450 Mac users in all. All of the academic computers are Macs, while all of the business office's computers are Windows-based.

Solution:

Grouplogic's ExtremeZ-IP ensures a worry-free work environment for crash-averse students and staff.

In July 2011, Gerson and his team deployed ExtremeZ-IP on the school's servers to allow students and staff working on Macs to connect to Windows shares through Apple File Protocol (AFP). The outcome? *"It works,"* says Gerson. *"It's more stable than anything we've tried in the past. We went from a situation where our system was crashing at least once every two weeks to something far more reliable."* Gerson explains that the school has four ExtremeZ-IP licenses: two for faculty and two for staff, divided alphabetically to balance the load.

Each instance works as a file server for its respective list of users, who are able to maintain their network home directories on the server—just as their counterparts working in the business office are able to do on their Windows-based PCs. All are able to work together, and to access server files on the network, without a hitch. Gerson points out that performance degradation—which was an additional problem when the under the previous system—is no longer an issue.

Previously, they were limited to 50 to 75 concurrent users per server and performance would slow as more users connected to the system. ExtremeZ-IP can handle significantly more users connected to the network at once with faster connections for each user. GroupLogic's tech support is an added benefit that Gerson says his team has been pleasantly surprised to encounter. *"With ExtremeZ-IP, the few times we have had an issue arise, it's been nice to reach a technically-competent person who understands the product, with minimal hold times,"* he says. Gerson explains that under the Xserve environment he chose to use Open Directory.

With the Windows-based servers and ExtremeZ-IP managing integration of Macs to the Windows-based servers, all users were required to switch to Active Directory—enabling the management of each computer to fall under one umbrella, which significantly simplified troubleshooting tasks for the technology department. Gerson's advice to technology administrators that are contemplating a Windowsbased server solution for Mac clients: Don't let fear get in the way.

"ExtremeZ-IP works great. It's stable, seamless and it works better for us to use Windows-based servers with ExtremeZ-IP to integrate Mac users to the system than other options that claim to provide file sharing for Mac and Windows-PC users," he says. He notes that while porting over to the new system does take some time, any porting over change would require the same time investment, and that doing it with ExtremeZ-IP is well worth the effort.

About Acronis®

Acronis® is leading the next wave of data availability, accessibility and protection solutions to simplify today's complex IT environments. Acronis technology enables organizations of all sizes to manage the always-on anywhere data access demands of users, reducing risk against the loss of valuable corporate data, and controlling management and storage costs. With proven technology for data migration and disaster recovery for physical, virtual and cloud environments, and secure enterprise file-sharing and synchronization regardless of type or platform, Acronis is enabling organizations to embrace new IT strategies and options such as BYOD and Mac in the enterprise. For additional information, please visit www.acronis.com. Follow Acronis on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/acronis>.

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