



FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

NETBOTZ PROTECTS IT INFRASTRUCTURE OF SECOND FASTEST GROWING SCHOOL SYSTEM IN THE U.S.

The Forsyth, Georgia County School System now uses NetBotz to protect its IT infrastructure from the physical threats that could jeopardize operations. Such threats include human error and intrusion as well as a host of environmental factors such as inadequate air flow, extreme temperatures, high humidity, water damage, amperage fluctuations and more.

*NetBotz Helps Forsyth,
One of Nation's Most
Innovative Users of
Technology in
Education, Protect Its
Technology Resources*

The school system, the nation's second fastest growing, is one of more than 125 schools and universities that use NetBotz to secure their IT infrastructures and remote, distributed locations. It is also among the nation's most aggressive user of technology and telecommunications to instruct its more than 20,000 students.

“Our vision is that our students are prepared for life in the 21st Century,” said Bailey Mitchell, Executive Director, Technical Services, for the school district. “That means our classroom technology promotes and facilitates an active student-learning environment where students use computers to link the real world to relevant topics.”

Among other things, the school has implemented a distributed model for classroom computing, which turns the traditional computer lab concept on its head. Instead of having students go to a computer lab, the technology lives in each classroom. The technology is a mix of desktops, laptops, software applications, Internet access and more. All classroom computers are on a high-speed, fiber optic network and each room has its own phone line, to facilitate communications between parents and teachers. A core of Instructional Technology Specialists works closely with classroom teachers to integrate technology into the curriculum.

Teachers and students use the technology in a variety of innovative ways, including conducting odorless and danger-free chemistry experiments; electronic compilation of report cards; collaborative school projects such as an “e-pal” program connecting Forsyth students with those in Japan; and communications between and among faculty, staff, students and parents.

The school's network supports 10,000 PCs across 23 remote locations: 3,000 notebooks and 7,000 desktops. Central computers and data system are housed in the school system's Administrative Building.

To protect the school system's infrastructure from the physical threats that could jeopardize its smooth functioning, Mitchell turned to the NetBotz Physical Monitoring Solution. Currently, Mitchell has deployed 24 NetBotz Monitoring Appliances, which all include built-in environmental sensors as well an integrated camera that can capture motion events. Each appliance can detect the presence of dangerous physical conditions. In addition, Mitchell's group uses NetBotz Central, a powerful tool that enables Mitchell to centrally monitor and manage multiple sites via a web browser.



EDUCATION



“I never knew that such a ‘clever creature’ as a physical monitoring solution like NetBotz even existed,” said Mitchell. “It’s a good thing there’s NetBotz. Environmental factors are a huge problem for us because schools are built for learning, not as housing for sophisticated and sensitive technology. Physical conditions are not ideal. In fact, school buildings are notorious for maintenance issues. So heat, humidity, water leaks, the presence of glass, etc., are all problems we face.”

As urgent is the problem of a wide-open door policy. People come and go, in and out, all school day. Thus, Mitchell needs to be vigilant in protecting the school system's IT assets against malfeasance or even human error. “Safeguarding all the school system's distributed equipment and network infrastructure is a big job,” Mitchell said.

Add to these problems the fact that, like that for so many of the nation’s schools, there’s a decided lack of support staff to monitor and protect, 24x7, across all the school’s distributed locations. NetBotz is now Mitchell's eyes and ears, watching over and alerting him and his staff about any potential problem: from threatening environmental conditions such as excess heat to watching who went in and out of server rooms and other locations where technology is located.

“NetBotz is a proactive solution that sends alerts about impending trouble,” Mitchell said. “This gives us time to correct a situation before it becomes a problem. In addition, we can correlate who goes in and out of a room with the information captured by the built-in camera in the NetBotz Monitoring Appliance. That means we can hold accountable any person who’s fooled around with our equipment.

“NetBotz is critical to the things we're doing here at Forsyth. Our expansive use of technology is the foundation to providing our students with a first-class education. Therefore, protecting that foundation is important. NetBotz helps us do that.”

The NetBotz Intelligent Monitoring Solution consists of Intelligent Monitoring Appliances with built-in environmental sensors and an integrated color camera that can capture and store motion events; Centralized Management and Monitoring; as well as Add-On hardware (sensors) and software. A fully scalable solution, users can deploy just monitoring appliances and get great value out of the solution. Later, they can add centralized management as well as a variety of Add-On Hardware and Software options.



About Forsyth County School System (www.forsyth.k12.ga.us)

The Forsyth County School System serves close to 20,000 students. All 23 schools are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and have exceeded the standards as defined and measured by the Georgia Department of Education.