



"The Casper Suite has ruined me as a system administrator - I never want to work without it again."

- Tom Larkin

# Kansas City, Kansas School District

Kansas City, KS

**Casper Suite Case Study:** March 2010

## The Cutting-Edge Custodian

Officially, Tom Larkin works in the Technology and Information Services department of the Kansas City, Kansas School District. If you ask him, however, he feels more aligned with the maintenance division. "I guess you could call me the Technical Janitor," says Tom, "if there's a network or system mess somewhere, I'll be cleaning it up." These messes aren't just little spills, either. With a one-to-one deployment of 6,000 machines spread through 6 buildings in the district, each with distinct technological requirements and challenges, Tom's 15 person team has a lot on their collective plate. Even when talking to industry-leading software developers at technology conferences, Tom was reminded of the enormity of his tasks. "They'd say, 'You one-to-one guys have the craziest questions.'" Whatever the mess he encounters, from imaging and deployment to day-to-day management, Tom has found that the Casper Suite makes cleaning up easier.

## Spring Cleaning

Every spring, Tom presides over a massive imaging project. It is an endeavor that Tom inherited quickly. Shortly after he was hired, Tom attending a training event for the Casper Suite. "I was at the JAMF training in Chicago that summer the last week of June. The first week of July, my boss dropped the bomb on me." That "bomb" was the news that due to requirements for state mandated testing software, all of the machines must have dual operating systems installed. "So not only did my co-workers and I have to image 6,000 machines," Tom points out, "I also had to create an image that worked - and it should have been done a few weeks ago." This task was traditionally outsourced to a third-party technology vendor, but Tom led the charge to make it domestic. "Our contractors found out we were doing it in-house and they did not think we could pull it off," Tom remembers. Complicating matters, much of the functionality Tom required was not yet part of the Casper Suite interface.

JAMF Software developers worked directly with Tom and wrote scripts to help create more robust capabilities - all of which are now part of the standard release - and soon Tom's team fully image a machine in 25 minutes or less. They completed the entire project, peaking at 450 images per day, no skeptical vendor required.

### Situation

#### Needs:

- Comprehensive Enterprise Imaging Solution
- Remote Management across Unique Subnets
- Flexible Administration Toolset

#### Environment:

- 8,000 Macs (6,000 laptops in a 1:1 program); 8,000 PCs
- 60 Sites, 6 1:1 locations
- 15 TIS professionals



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“To be fair,” Tom acknowledges, “they did have a lot more steps. We use the Casper Suite for inventory as well as imaging, so a lot of the work was already done for us.”

## A Flexible Toolbox

As valuable as the large project is to the technology division of KCKPS, the everyday clean-ups are where the Casper Suite really shines. “If we had to do client management without the Casper Suite,” says Tom, “I’d probably cry.” In an environment where specific issues require unique solutions, Tom utilizes the Casper Suite’s flexibility to create efficient solutions. “It’s a tool set for management and there’s really no limit to what you can and can’t do. No piece of software is perfect, but it took me time to understand just how much it allowed me to accomplish.” Tom uses the Casper Suite to solve routine problems, like central update scheduling that can easily work with absentee users. But it also helps solve more difficult issues, like mitigating shortcomings of self-contained applications in an enterprise environment. “I can’t think of another way to mass-deploy Firefox,” Tom muses. Sometimes a quick reaction is the most important; Tom recalls a day when his janitorial duties included a little fire-fighting. “We had a password leak,” he explains, “and working in a K-12 education environment, you can imagine that it spread like wildfire.” Protocol called for a system-wide password update to protect against unauthorized activity and to secure sensitive data. Had Tom been limited to a distributed management system without policy and package based deployment, the window of time for an opportunistic offender would have been wide indeed. Instead, Tom turned to the Casper Suite. “We had every user’s access updated in a single day,” he says.

The Casper Suite also allows Tom to leverage the work done by other technology colleagues. “We have a very organized and methodical Network Administrator,” says Tom, “so our network is intuitively divided into sub-nets.” For example, each of the managed sites in the KCKPS system is organized into its own network subdivision. “Casper’s support of network-based policies makes deployment on this kind of network very easy,” Tom explains. “It’s good to be able to take advantage of another person’s expertise.”

## Many Hands Making Light Work

Tom’s involvement with Casper Suite doesn’t end with daily duties. From his earliest days as a user, Tom has been working with the JAMF Software support team to help mold the application to his needs. Whether he has a specific issue or a suggestion for a new feature, Tom is impressed with his response. “I feel like more than just a user: I’ve actually spoken to developers.” Tom is also an active member of the JAMF Software user community. “It’s great, because if someone has an issue and I can help, it lets me think of other ways to solve my problems.” In Tom’s view, the collaborative community is a key for developing innovative ways to keep his system tidy. Whether it’s clearing routine clutter, utilizing a colleague’s expertise, or conquering a real dilemma, Tom counts on the Casper Suite to make his daunting tasks manageable and to keep his system spic-and-span.

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JAMF Software  
1011 Washington Ave. S Suite 350  
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Phone: (612) 605-6625  
[www.jamfsoftware.com](http://www.jamfsoftware.com)  
[info@jamfsoftware.com](mailto:info@jamfsoftware.com)

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