Hover over a thumbnail view to see exactly what your students are viewing.

ICT REVIEWS RECOMMENDED

NetSupport School 10.5

The Rolls-Royce of classroom management software, with a bundle of "bonus" features included in the price

NetSupport School (NSS) goes way beyond basic classroom management software, offering facilities for monitoring and controlling access to applications, alongside internet and printing resources. Plus, it has built-in lesson-planning tools, a test designer, a journal to record outcomes and the luxury of full remote control. You can power machines up and down to a schedule, and there's even fully featured remote support.

The installation process begins by loading a Tutor component onto the master system, which controls all other PCs in the classroom. Pupils' PCs can then connect to this master system. Users can be placed in groups to represent classrooms, and custom layouts are used to show locations.

With one click, teachers can mute audio, lock mice and keyboards and blank all screens to grab pupils' attention. The Monitor window shows thumbnails of pupils' screens, with an auto-zoom for more detail. The new audio-monitoring feature offers language lab facilities, with the ability to listen in on individual pupils' activity. In this era of primary languages, this feature is extremely useful for speaking and listening activities across a class.

The Testing Console is another very useful feature, allowing a combination of multiple-choice questions, including text, graphics, video and audio files. Teachers can create tests in advance of lessons, for midpoint and end-of-unit assessments and even export the outcomes to the Journal tool, to engage users in the process. Teachers can share this with parents on parental consultation evenings or capture key learning landmarks – including exporting test results into a PDF document that can be uploaded to a learning platform or printed off. An integral countdown clock keeps pupils on task and alert to time left to complete the tests. A very handy feature indeed!

Internet metering makes NSS unique; it keeps a close eye on pupils' website habits, right down to the specific page. The Tutor console allows teachers to view what pupils are viewing and restrict access to websites and applications. They can also quick launch a program, reducing time spent on clicking around looking for programs or websites. It's even possible to monitor keyboard strokes to see what pupils have been writing, with a list of target words that are highlighted if inputted, and to annotate over a pupil's screen.

Another feature that makes NSS stand out from the rest of the class is the Tech Console. The ability to provide remote support to any machine, or any user logged in via the software, provides a feature that will not only return on investment, but also please end users.

A class-leading product, it's little wonder NSS is rebadged by many suppliers, including RM and Viglen. With the latest release adding support for Linux and Apple products, it's very clearly the market leader.

EASE OF USE ★★★★★★

FEATURES ★★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★☆

OVERALL ★★★★★★