



# Kansas City, Kansas School District

Kansas City, KS

A JAMF SOFTWARE CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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**Needs:**

- Comprehensive enterprise imaging solution
- Remote management across unique subnets
- Flexible administration toolset

**Environment 2010:**

- 8,000 Macs (6,000 laptops in a one-to-one program);
- 8,000 PCs
- 60 sites, six one-to-one locations
- 15 TIS professionals

**Environment 2012**

- 14,000 Macs (6,000 laptops in a one-to-one program);
  - 8,000 PCs
  - 1,000 iOS devices
  - 60 Sites, six one-to-one locations
  - 15 TIS professionals
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## 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,” said 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 six 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 course for the Casper Suite.



“I was at the JAMF Software training in Chicago that summer the last week of June,” he said. “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 said. “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 said. 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 was able to fully image a machine in 25 minutes or less. They completed the entire project, peaking at 450 images per day, no skeptical vendor required.

## 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,” said 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 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 said.

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 said. “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 said.

The Casper Suite also allows Tom to leverage the work done by other technology colleagues.



“We have a very organized and methodical Network Administrator,” said 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.

“The Casper Suite’s support of network-based policies makes deployment on this kind of network very easy,” Tom said. “It’s good to be able to take advantage of another person’s expertise.”

## Many hands making light work

Tom’s involvement with the 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 the response.

“I feel like more than just a user, I’ve actually spoken to developers,” said Tom, who 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.

“

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

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— Tom Larkin



# Where Are They Now?

## Casper Suite case study Follow-up: January 2012

Tom Larkin and his team are still keeping their system neat and tidy. Despite some changes here and there to their environment, Tom said with the Casper Suite his job only gets easier over time.

“Things have changed a lot. But to be honest, my job is easier,” said Tom. “It’s pretty much getting easier and easier every year. Your first two years are the hardest. But now when June hits, we don’t have 10 meetings about what we’re going to do. We just do it.”

### Sharing the load

After receiving a large grant, their administration was recently able to purchase 1,000 iOS devices for the district. But with limited resources to bring them under management, Tom’s team was in a bit of a pickle. They weren’t sure if their staff of six Mac admins could maintain an environment that was now up to 14,000 Macs, plus 1,000 iOS devices. As it turns out, they never had to worry about it.”

“The educational staff was like, ‘Well, we’ll try; we’ll take care of it,’” said Tom. “We showed them the ropes, and iOS management is so easy you don’t have to be a technical person to do it. It’s how things go around here. We just see where we are, and we make the best of it every time.”

Since the education team has taken on this responsibility, Tom said they haven’t experienced too many challenges. He said while the concepts may take some time to understand, overall it’s very straightforward to manage their iOS devices with the Casper Suite. It has been especially helpful for app purchase

and distribution. Using Apple’s Volume Purchase Program, the education team has been able to efficiently distribute apps to their students, without bringing in the IT department for help.

### Empowering the end user

This past summer, Tom’s team distributed 6,000 MacBook Air machines throughout the district. Because of the smaller hard drives on these computers, they can no longer deploy full software packages by default. However, Self Service is making it possible for each end user to customize their installations so all of their needs are met. Users that need certain add-ons for a software package can still access them on-demand using Self Service.

“Self Service has really allowed us to make the base image a smaller footprint on the hard drive,” said Tom. “And the teachers love it. They just tell their students, ‘You’re going to need this application this semester; it’s on Self Service. Go grab it.’”

### Like a well-oiled machine

Along with their continued maintenance for routine tasks, Tom said he is looking forward to using the Casper Suite for some more heavy-duty projects in the near future. These include developing some in-house apps with the JSS API; setting up a help desk ticketing system with Self Service; and upgrading to OS X Lion.

Overall, after many years of management under their belt, their environment is functioning like a well-oiled machine. Despite



feeling like “technical janitors” at times, Tom’s team has been able to develop a polished and efficient system that has been beneficial for their entire district. Tom jokingly admits they still have to do some work, but they just let the Casper Suite take care of the less desirable chores.

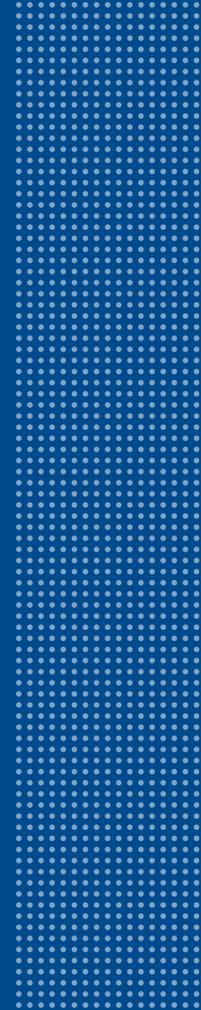
“The Casper Suite is always kind of like the guy you call to clean up the mess. When something happens I can always pull the trigger on the Casper Suite and fix that mess that got created. It’s that easy.”

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To learn more about Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools, visit [www.kckps.cloudaccess.net](http://www.kckps.cloudaccess.net).



To learn about how the Casper Suite can make an impact on your Mac and iOS management, visit [www.jamfsoftware.com](http://www.jamfsoftware.com).