

## *Netier Technologies - Case Studies*

### **Gateway@Edgewood Terrace**

#### **Situation**

Edgewood Terrace, a government-subsidized assisted housing site owned by Community Preservation and Development Corporation (CPDC), is on a long metamorphosis from its days of being overrun with crime and drugs. Various public and private gifts have paved the way for the multifamily housing project outside Washington, DC, to equip its site with computer labs as well as install computers in residents' apartments. A \$100,000 gift from Microsoft provided the wiring and equipped the computer labs. The plan was to give underprivileged residents valuable computer training and job-search capabilities. Residents use the computers in their apartments for word-processing, accessing the Internet and e-mailing friends and prospective employers.

Putting computers in apartments can be risky, however. Edgewood officials feared installing a traditional PC/LAN network because of the expense and time required for maintenance and upgrades. Networked PCs do not provide the centralized management capabilities and solid-state security needed to maintain an effective, secure network in the Edgewood Terrace environment.

#### **Solution**

Edgewood opted for a thin-client/server network because thin clients offer the look and feel of Windows desktops but are managed centrally from an individual workstation. The thin-client computers use embedded versions of the Windows® NT 4.0 Workstation operating system and enjoy access to familiar applications, which reside on a server. Therefore, hard drives are not at risk and are not susceptible to viruses because data files are stored centrally on the server. This arrangement assures that computers in the hands of residents are tamperproof, are configured and maintained remotely and are easily upgraded, saving an estimated 46 percent in ownership costs over time compared to traditional PC/LAN networks.

As part of its multi-million dollar network, Edgewood chose Netier Technologies' NetXpress SL1000 thin client computer for several reasons:

- NetXpress integrates seamlessly into CPDC's Microsoft Windows NT® 4.0 Terminal Server Edition-based network, incorporating an embedded version of Windows NT 4.0 Workstation in the desktop computer.
- CPDC wanted its residents to have computers with internal floppy disk drives and printer ports to permanently record their work and assure confidentiality. Netier was the only developer who could accommodate that request.

Netier offered solid-state units with no moving parts and thus greater reliability. Netier's rugged design included a metal casing and convenient size: a standard monitor and keyboard and a desktop device smaller than an average dictionary.

#### **Results**

Edgewood is well on its way to building an "Electronic Village," the first of its kind and a model for similar affordable housing sites nationwide. When residents graduate from a basic computer class, they will receive Netier desktop computers which they can simply take home, plug in and continue using. What they will see on the computer in their apartments will match what they saw in the computer labs.

Best of all, CPDC officials can monitor and configure the computers remotely. There is no need to hire additional IT staff to be dispatched to maintain the units.

#### **Verdict**

"Adding Netier's thin clients after a two-year search makes Edgewood a model for other housing developments and human service organizations looking to establish community centers, computer training and employment services," said Leslie Steen, CPDC president.