

Pairing Mac experience with a robust management tool

The Ohio State University

COLUMBUS, OH

Exponential function

In algebra, an exponential function is used to model exponential growth and compound interest. In the Mathematics Department at The Ohio State University, Tim Winningham has the exponential function of Systems Manager. He is responsible for 225 Macs, which makes the math department the largest self-managed Apple installation on campus.

“There are other departments with more complicated equipment,” said Tim. “But every student takes math classes.”

Keeping everything in order used to rely on a few Apple utilities and a lot of procedural considerations, held together by Tim’s experience. When Tim was originally introduced to Jamf Pro, he was skeptical that there was a tool that could really help his circumstances.

“I thought, I don’t need this,” he said. “I’ve been running Macs for 10 years, I know how to make things work, and I like it that way.”

But after a demo, Tim found that Jamf Pro was more than the sum of its parts. “I couldn’t have been more wrong.”

Tim was able to leverage his experience to create an efficient and powerful management formula that produces solid results for his department.

AT A GLANCE



Public research university located in Columbus, Ohio



Utilizes Jamf Pro to manage 225 Macs



Leverage Self Service to empower everyone with the resources they need



Needed a faster way to create software packages



Utilize Composer to cut package creation time in half



Streamlined inventory and asset tracking with Jamf Pro



INSTANTANEOUS ACCELERATION

In calculus, instantaneous acceleration refers to the rate at which an object's instantaneous velocity is changing at a particular moment. Tim's team found instantaneous acceleration with their first exposure to Jamf Pro—the point-and-click package creation tool called Composer. With their previous solution, creating deployment packages “took forever.”

“Composer cut the time in half,” said Tim.

With its intuitive interface, Tim began to see an opportunity to delegate tasks to students working in his department—something he had not been able to confidently accomplish before.

“I could take my ten years of systems experience and extend some of my knowledge to students whose only Apple experience is listening to their iPod,” he said.

Utilizing his student resources was also easier with JamfVNC. The department's previous solution was a balancing act between high licensing cost for full-featured support software and security concerns for more affordable options. Jamf Pro provided a best-of-both-worlds solution.

“If a student tech is going to control a department head's computer, you want to be sure you've got good security there,” said Tim. “JamfVNC has controls that our techs find easy, with enough end-user security to keep us confident.”

"Our core mission is to support learning and research in mathematics, and the Jamf Pro helps us do that."

– Tim Winningham, Systems Manager





HERO'S FORMULA

In trigonometry, Hero's Formula relates the area of a triangle to the measure of its sides. Tim found a hero's formula in Jamf Pro's inventory management capabilities.

"We were given a mandate to track all of our non-capitalized assets, and we had to do it right away," Tim recalls. "We needed to have a record for every computer, monitor, printer, and external hard drive."

This included anything used as a technical asset in the department. The project was one of those classic IT problems: a difficult task in addition to regular duties which was to be performed without any additional time or resources. With Jamf Pro's integrated inventory management, Tim's team had a solution.

Tim described the simple process: "Slap a sticker on it and add it. Even with non-controlled items, the database was already in place for us."

The team's hard work, combined with a manageable process, resulted in a hero's effort in the face of a daunting assignment.

"We met the impossible deadline, and we were the only department to do so," Tim said with a smile evident in his voice. "It's kind of a point of pride for us."



STRONGLY INCREASING SOLUTION

In statistical mathematics, a strongly increasing solution describes a set of values for a formula without an absolute solution. For Tim, he sees the potential to increase the ways he uses Jamf Pro for his department's systems management.

Some of this potential was recently realized when Tim attended a Certified Casper Administrator (CCA) course. Tim learned new tips from his instructor, and was able to both provide and receive advice from his classmates. Returning from the event, Tim instituted a set of best practices in his department, and describes that for the members of his team, "the light bulb really came on."

The team has begun to expand their use of Jamf Pro—including recently added videos to Jamf Pro's Self Service help portal. "Students may need this information at 2 a.m.," he said. "And now it's there for them in a very accessible form."

Ultimately, Tim sees Jamf Pro as a tool for accomplishing an important mission. "It's great that we have sexy new Macs," he explains. "But not if no one knows how to use them. Our core mission is to support learning and research in mathematics, and Jamf Pro helps us do that."



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