



NOR-TECH

People Friendly Technology

Case Study

Rochester Community and Technical College

Making Smart Classrooms Even Smarter

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Rochester Community and Technical College Information Technology Specialist Cuong Tran

About Rochester Community and Technical College

Rochester Community and Technical College, located in Rochester, Minn., was founded in 1915 by Dr. Charles Mayo. It is one of the oldest community colleges in the U.S. The school offers more than 70 technical and transfer programs and over 100 degree options with innovative technology initiatives throughout the campus. Current full-time enrollment is around 4,400. The faculty is consistently recognized for excellence in a number of areas including technology expertise.



Their Challenge

RCTC Information Technology Specialist Cuong Tran is charged with continually updating the school's 100 smart classrooms.

Smart Classrooms are defined as technology-optimized to support opportunities for teaching and learning. Typical smart classroom devices include computers, specialized software, audience response technology, assistive listening devices, networking, and audio/visual capabilities. Nor-Tech has been providing this technology to educational institutions for nearly two decades.

About one-half of RCTC's classrooms are smart classrooms. “Every year we update about 1/3 of our smart classrooms,” Cuong said. “These classrooms are very convenient for the teachers—allowing them to do things such as conduct demos and play videos.”

Our Solution

Nor-Tech has been working with Cuong to supply technology for the school since 2008. The most recent order was for 30 monitors, 30 NUCS that mount on the monitors and 30 Nor-Tech Voyageur small form factor desktops. The NUCs and monitors were for RCTC's computer lab and the Voyageur desktops were designated for smart classrooms. Part of the value-add service that Nor-Tech provided was installing the NUCs on the monitors prior to delivery.

Nor-Tech Senior Account Manager Tom Morton said, “RCTC has been a very loyal client. They usually order from us in the spring and we deliver in the summer. Cuong first contacted me about this order at a technology conference here in Minnesota. RCTC technology personnel came by our booth, saw the Nor-Tech/Intel NUC solution and were impressed with it. Nor-Tech then took the extra step by offering them a demo unit.”

The Voyager desktops were destined to replace full-sized, space-consuming desktops in the school’s computer labs. “This year, we decided to try putting the Intel NUCs instead of the desktops, in one of our computer labs,” Cuong said. “It gives the students more furniture desktop space to work with. The technology has come far enough that we were pretty sure we could get the same power and functionality in the Intel NUC as the regular-sized desktop.”

It was a bit of a challenge for Nor-Tech, but then Nor-Tech’s engineers look forward to challenges like this. “The real issue for RCTC was saving desktop space,” Tom said. “It was an opportunity for us to incorporate all of the features, capabilities, capacities, and power in a unit that was much smaller than the full-sized desktops they were replacing,” Tom said. “Ultimately we were all very happy with the custom Voyager solution we were able to develop and deliver to RCTC.”

Their Success

After the technology was delivered, Tom followed up until he was certain that everything was running well and that Cuong and the entire RCTC technology team were happy.

“Everything appears to be just as we ordered,” Cuong said. “I like the fact that Nor-Tech is local and I have always been particularly pleased with the support—their technical support in particular is very good. Whenever I need something, there is a very quick turnaround. I have recommended Nor-Tech to other staff members here,” Cuong said. “I tell them that you will have a better machine to work with and a better warranty than you would with some of the bigger names that have horrible support.”

Tom and Nor-Tech’s technology team continue to enjoy working with Cuong and RCTC. “This school has an excellent reputation as one of the nation’s premier community colleges,” Tom said. “And it’s not hard to understand why. Their attention to detail has always been apparent in our interactions with them and I’m sure it extends to every area of this amazing school. It is always a pleasure to work with Cuong and the rest of the staff.”

About Nor-Tech

Nor-Tech is on CRN’s list of the top *40 Data Center Infrastructure Providers* along with IBM, Oracle, Dell, and Supermicro; and is a high performance computer builder for 2015 and 2017 Nobel Physics Award-winning projects. Nor-Tech engineers average 20+ years of experience. This strong industry reputation and deep partner relationships also enable the company to be a leading supplier of cost-effective Lenovo desktops, laptops, tablets and Chromebooks to schools and enterprises. All of Nor-Tech’s high performance technology is developed by Nor-Tech in Minnesota and supported by Nor-Tech around the world. The company is headquartered in Burnsville, Minn. just outside of Minneapolis. Nor-Tech holds the following contracts: GSA, University of Wisconsin System, NASA SEWP V.

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