



*CloudReady enables this Texas district to extend the life of its older PCs - simply and cost effectively.*

With an innovative, browser-based OS from Neverware, Huntsville Independent School District has unified its network of devices into a single Google Apps environment.

Tracie Simental, technology director for the 6,300-student Huntsville Independent School District in east Texas, knows that a seven- or eight- year refresh cycle for computing devices is not ideal.

“Everyone would love to have a three- to five- year refresh plan,” she said- but sometimes reality gets in the way.

Simental and her staff were looking for ways to extend the life of their older devices, which were a mix of Windows-based computers, laptops, and netbooks. These devices were “very limited in what they could do,” Simental said, and many were being used just to browse the web.

Simental’s IT team had set up a virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) environment with about 350 of these older machines, using Citrix and VMware virtualization software—but it was costly and difficult to maintain this environment. So when one of Simental’s vendor partners suggested that she look into Neverware, she was eager to try another option.

**Turning PCs into Chromebooks**

Using Google’s open-source version of its Chrome operating system, Neverware’s CloudReady software transforms a Windows or Mac OS-based computer into a device that functions just like a Chromebook. With CloudReady, school IT staff can unify a network of existing Windows and Mac machines with Chromebooks, under a central Google Admin console.

Simental said her IT staff had been trying to deploy the Chrome operating system on the district’s older machines, but “we were struggling with the drivers, and it was harder than we thought it was going to be,” she noted. “We ran into some roadblocks.”

CloudReady makes this process simple by installing the operating system from a USB drive for just \$25 per device, per year. “When we saw what was possible, we were very interested,” Simental said. “We decided to become one of the pilot districts—and we have been extremely successful.”



**HUNTSVILLE ISD  
FAST FACTS**

**The challenge**

Windows-based devices that were more than five years old had outlived their usefulness, but the district could not afford to replace them with newer machines.

**The solution**

With CloudReady, Huntsville has transformed over 100 devices running various versions of Windows into Chrome devices. This has allowed IT staff to deploy Google Apps for Education and manage the devices easily through the Google Admin console - turning these older machines into more useful learning tools.

**The results**

Huntsville ISD has reclaimed the usefulness of these older machines. They boot up faster, have a longer battery life, and are much easier to manage. “CloudReady is helping us save money and better meet the needs of our students,” said Technology Director Tracie Simental.

With Neverware's solution, Simental has unified approximately one hundred devices that were previously running on various versions of Windows. This has allowed her staff to deploy Google Apps for Education and manage the devices easily through the Google Admin console—and it has turned these older machines into more useful learning tools.

Because Huntsville ISD already had integrated about 2,000 Chromebooks into its classrooms and was using Gmail and Google Apps for Education, transitioning from a Windows-based environment to a Google environment has been a breeze, Simental said.

“Teachers were already comfortable with the platform, and so were students,” she said. “That allowed us to put these devices side by side with the Chromebooks and make the transition with no additional training.” She added that students and teachers “haven't even noticed a difference” between these older devices and the newer Chromebooks.

### **Faster boot time, longer battery life**

Besides reclaiming the usefulness of its outdated machines, Huntsville ISD has seen other benefits from the CloudReady solution as well.

For instance, the district's older devices now take only a few seconds to boot up—and because they are running on a simpler operating system, “we've doubled the battery life of our netbooks,” Simental said.

The devices also are much easier to manage now. “We've put them out there and essentially forgotten about them,” she said. “Our IT staff hasn't had to spend any time on them at all.”

Huntsville ISD is looking at plans to migrate from its costly, management-intensive VDI environment to a fully CloudReady environment over the next few years.

### **Saving money—while better meeting students' needs**

Not only is CloudReady a much easier environment to support and maintain than VDI; it's much less expensive as well. Simental expects to cut her annual software licensing costs in half for these older machines, while also avoiding server refresh costs every four years.

“Neverware has been great to work with,” Simental said. “I think they understand the challenges of education very well. They've been able to identify a pain point that districts have and then help in a very cost effective way. That doesn't happen very often, and when it does, you need to take advantage of it.”

She concluded: “CloudReady is helping us save money and better meet the needs of our students.”

### **Student enrollment:**

6,300 over 9 schools

### **Number of computers: 5,400**

### **Pre-existing platforms:**

- Windows 7
- Windows XP
- Google Chromebooks
- Citrix VDI