

Carlos Rosario International Charter School

Case Study



Highly Acclaimed Adult School Implements Smartcard Technology as a Multi-functional Campus Tool

The Organization

Carlos Rosario International Charter School (CRICS)

The Challenges

- Reduce IT help desk costs
- Increase security
- Make computer access easy

Power LogOn Solution

CRICS needed

- Password security & management
- Student ID badge
- Network integration
- Low cost of ownership

The Results

- IT centralized password management
- ID Badge & logical access. Cashless payment (future)
- Transferable licenses. No subscription fees
- Log into multiple Windows' computers, applications, Internet & server networks.
- Auto logoff when card is removed

The Carlos Rosario International Charter School aims to provide education that prepares the diverse adult immigrant population of Washington, DC to become invested, productive citizens and members of American society. With 1,200 to 1,500 students per year, it is one of the few accredited adult education schools in the country.

Part of the learning curriculum at the school is to get students comfortable with technology by accessing personal computers in any of the six computer labs or 30 classrooms on the premises. Like many environments with multiple users and multiple computers, the students and staff had been logging onto the computers using their own unique user names and passwords. However, this resulted in a considerable amount of wasted time, money and resources the IT staff spent resetting forgotten passwords and unlocking computers that had locked due to the user not logging off properly.

In order to find a method that would make computer access easier for the students, less time consuming for teachers and the IT department while still maintaining a secure network, Karen Clay, IT Director for the school, began looking for a user authentication solution that could meet very specific criteria unique to her particular environment.

"Many of our students are new to the country and have not used a computer before," said Clay. "I knew we needed a system in place that would grant students computer access without adding any more responsibility on their shoulders. Not only that, but this system would have to streamline our administrative functions and be cost-effective in terms of reducing the time spent on network access issues."

After conducting her research, Clay decided on a customizable smartcard solution that could allow her department to issue each individual student a credit card-like key that would serve as both the student ID card and computer access tool.

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Power LogOn Features

Security

Strong Passwords: Unique, 20-character long passwords for every account, using any of the available 96 keyboard characters, in random order.

Phishing and Pharming Protection: Power LogOn stores the URL / path of the logon account. If the site's URL does not match, Power LogOn does not release the password.

Keylogger Protection: Auto-start Internet Explorer or Application, password auto-form fill & auto-submit.

Convenience

Users never have to remember or type any log on user names or passwords. Now, organizations can implement strong password assignment policies with convenient password management for their employees.

Affordable

Software can be loaded onto an unlimited number of computers, because the user license is on the card not the software.

Power LogOn licenses are transferable and recyclable. No annual subscription or renewal fees.

Power LogOn works with a number of different card technologies (i.e. RFID, contact smart chips, magstripe, & bar code).

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The system she chose, Power LogOn® Administrator by Access Smart®, could be integrated into the network's Active Directory and offer students secure and easy access to the network using any student computer on the premises. At each station, a small card reader plugs into the USB port of the desktop, and the student simply inserts their card which grants them access. When the students remove their cards, their account is automatically closed, which prevents unauthorized access to the network and enables the computer to be ready for the next student to logon.

After getting approval to install the system, Clay purchased 2,500 smart-cards and 250 card readers. Each card was issued in a matter of minutes, making new student registration quick and more efficient for the many registrations that take place throughout the school year.

"A major selling point for me on the Power LogOn system was the card itself," said Clay. "The students are already required to carry a student ID card to enter the facility. We print the student photo and identification information on one side, load their computer login information on the other, and they have only one card to keep track of. Also, the system did not involve any back-end installation or existing network modifications that would have been cumbersome for my department to install and maintain. Since I can recycle card licenses, the overall maintenance costs are low, and I like the fact that it's scalable and will grow with our school's needs in the future."

When asked about future plans for the system, Clay said she plans to install Power LogOn onto a SQL server so that her department will not have to maintain a separate database. She has also talked about enabling graduating students to purchase their cards as part of a package of promotional benefits for alumni.

"Working with Access Smart has been outstanding," said Clay. "After helping me to determine how the system should be configured to meet our needs, the whole implementation was finished in a few weeks and the tech support was fantastic. I knew we needed a system that was going to work right out of the gate in order to gain staff approval. Now, people come up to me all the time and tell me how easy it is to use. I couldn't be happier with the outcome."