



Education

Reacting fast to keep **education** **on track**

Midland College

When Midland College needed to move learning online in the early days of the pandemic, Lenovo and partner Abacus Computers helped the college step up its IT capabilities in record time.

Lenovo

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Who is Midland College?

Midland College is an independent public higher education institution with an enrollment of over 4,000 students. It offers more than 100 associate degree and certificate programs, as well as several continuing education programs and two bachelor degrees.

Established 50 years ago as an independent junior college, Midland College now operates a main campus and five satellite campuses in the cities of Midland and Fort Stockton, Texas.



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The Challenge

Technology has long played an important role in supporting teaching and learning at Midland College. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, IT suddenly took center stage. The college already operated a sizeable fleet of desktops and laptops for on-campus education, but it needed to significantly scale up its capabilities to make the transition to remote learning.

Shawn Shreves, Vice President of IT at Midland College, recalls: “There was a huge rush to enable remote learning in the early days of the pandemic. We needed a lot more IT equipment—laptops, webcams, and microphones—and we needed it right away. However, our existing hardware provider was struggling with the spike in demand, leading to long delays in getting equipment out to clients like ourselves.”

Life on campus had already been massively disrupted by the pandemic, and Midland College was determined not to let IT supply issues compound the problem. It set out to find a new hardware provider who could deliver the equipment it needed to support remote learning.

Solid technology that's **easy** to **manage**

Midland College placed an initial order for 250 Lenovo ThinkPad laptops. Working with long-time partner and IT reseller Abacus Computers, the college was able to acquire the laptops in less than two weeks, at a time when demand was sky high.

Daniel Ortega, Director of Technical Services at Midland College, recalls: “When we received the first Lenovo laptops, our technicians gave them a test drive and really pushed the devices to their limits. We found the hardware to be very solid and high-performing. We distributed most of the laptops to our faculty to enable them to lead lessons from home. We also loaned some devices to students who didn't have or couldn't afford to buy their own laptops.”

Hardware

Lenovo ThinkCentre M70 Tiny-in-One
Lenovo ThinkPad P14s laptops
Lenovo ThinkPad P15s laptops
Lenovo ThinkStation P340 workstations
Lenovo ThinkStation P350 workstations
Lenovo ThinkVision monitors

Software

Lenovo Vantage

Services

Lenovo Premier Support

Midland College has been steadily replacing its old hardware inventory with fresh Lenovo equipment ever since. It now operates with more than 1,000 Lenovo devices, most of which are Lenovo ThinkStation P Series workstations.

Shreves comments: “Right now, approximately 70% of the devices across all of our campuses are Lenovo. Our technicians can’t wait until we are running a full Lenovo fleet—they consider Lenovo a huge improvement on our previous hardware!”

This is thanks to the resilience and ease-of-management of the Lenovo hardware. Midland College has experienced no major issues with its Lenovo devices in more than two years of operation. “Lenovo machines don’t break,” says Shreves. “This is particularly important when you consider where we are located in West Texas. The next closest city, Lubbock, is three hours away. In the past, we’ve had trouble receiving support and spare parts in a timely manner. That’s not something we need to worry about with Lenovo—their workstations have some of the lowest incident rates in the industry.”

For day-to-day management, the IT team makes extensive use of the Lenovo Vantage app for everything from automatic driver and BIOS updates to hardware settings and security controls.



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“The Lenovo Vantage app is a godsend. It’s a one-stop shop for managing device updates, settings, and performance—it makes life so much easier for us as an IT team.”

Daniel Ortega

Director of Technical Services, Midland College

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Results

With help from Lenovo and Abacus, Midland College was able to chart a safe course through a time of unprecedented disruption, obtaining the hardware resources it needed to enable effective remote education.

“Lenovo really delivered for us during the pandemic,” says Shreves. “Unlike other vendors, who gave us delivery timeframes of months, Lenovo was able to consistently ship out equipment in a matter of weeks. And if there was even a slight delay to a planned delivery, Lenovo would notify us right away, which we really appreciated.”



Robust, resilient, reliable hardware



1,000+ devices from one point of control



Steady supply during the pandemic

Now that on-campus activities have resumed, Midland College is ready to support students and staff with a modern, robust, and efficient IT fleet.

Ortega states: “We’ve had great feedback from our users on the Lenovo devices. They especially like the sleek design of the Lenovo ThinkVision monitors and the compactness of the Lenovo ThinkCentre M70 Tiny All-in-One workstation. Meanwhile, our IT technicians love how easy the hardware is to deploy and manage. In fact, with Lenovo, we’ve been able to cut the time taken to configure a new machine from 45 minutes to just 15 minutes. For an IT inventory as big as ours, that adds up to a huge amount of time saved.”

With Lenovo Premier Support, Midland College has a direct line to highly qualified technicians for prompt resolution. “We often struggled to get timely support from our previous vendor,” says Ortega. “But there’s no waiting on hold with Lenovo. We can always get through to the people we need whenever any issues crop up.”

In Lenovo, Midland College has found a true partner, and close collaboration between the two organizations is helping the college to get more out of its hardware investment.



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“We like everything about Lenovo: the equipment, the service, and the sales reps are all awesome. We especially value the relationship that we’ve built with the Lenovo team. They reach out to us regularly to check in on things, invite us to events, and pass on information that they think we’ll be interested in. This helps us on the IT team to strengthen our knowledge and operate our technology more effectively, which really allows us to be a better partner to our community of teachers and learners.”

Shawn Shreves

Vice President of IT, Midland College

Why **Lenovo**?

Midland College teamed up with Abacus, who quickly put forward Lenovo as a strong contender in the hardware space.

Shreves explains: “We learned that many other school districts in the area were using Lenovo hardware. That got our attention, as it showed that Lenovo was used to delivering large quantities of machines that could withstand use by students.

“Abacus also scanned the market for us and confirmed that Lenovo had more stock in their distribution channel and a stronger supply chain, which meant that they could deliver faster than other vendors.”



How do you meet new demands without delay?

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