Higher Education Mac Labs Reimagined

Graduate to a better Mac experience

Once the final bell rings for high school seniors, the next step for many of them is to pursue a higher education degree. In order to provide the best experience for these young adults and set them up for professional success, higher education institutions need to equip students with secure technology students can count on to be both creative and productive. For today's student, that solution is Apple — as a **2017 survey conducted by Dimensional Research** cited that 80 percent of higher education institutions offer Mac due to student preference and better residual value than PC.

While many K-12 schools make technology readily available to students in the form of a 1-to-1 iPad device program, this is often not the case at the college level. Instead, most, if not all, universities have computer labs. Labs are a cost-effective and efficient way to ensure students have access to a computer with the apps they need to be successful, saving students the cost of purchasing computer hardware and software. Labs ensure digital equity for students who would not otherwise be able to afford these luxuries.

To see how Jamf amplifies the power of Mac labs in higher education, visit: **www.jamf.com**

MAKING LABS POSSIBLE FOR STUDENTS

Whether a student is writing a term paper, designing graphics or creating a mobile app, his or her permissions and access needs to be both consistent and secure regardless of which Mac or lab he or she chooses on a particular day.

While students can enjoy a sit-down-and-get-started experience, IT, and often the student workers they employ, have not been privy to such a simplified work environment.

With limited budgets that are often segmented by department, today's university IT tend to rely on traditional imaging practices to:

- Maintain the Mac lab and keep each computer current to avoid viruses and costly data breaches.

- Keep student data private, even though potentially hundreds of students are interacting with the same machine on a daily basis.

- Ensure students have access to the materials they need each time they log in.

IMAGING MACHINES AS THE DEFAULT

To get Mac labs up and running, today's IT typically builds a base image that includes the operating system, applications, software and settings IT deems as potentially needed by every student. This image is created leveraging an imaging tool to build a fully functioning version of macOS for each Mac.

Once the base image is created, IT then manually installs the image by plugging in a thumb drive to each Mac. This requires a lot of hands-on, time-consuming work from IT. Not to mention that base images are typically large files that take a long time to load. And, while images are loading, students are unfortunately not able to access the machines.

This traditional method requires higher education IT staff to spend lots of time creating a bloated base image that will become obsolete the next time a new version of the software is available. When that happens (and it happens a lot), IT reverts back to updating their image to start the process all over again. In short, imaging equates to a vicious cycle of constantly and manually updating machines.

Obviously, this is not an ideal way to get computers deployed and attempt to keep them current and secure with all the software students require.
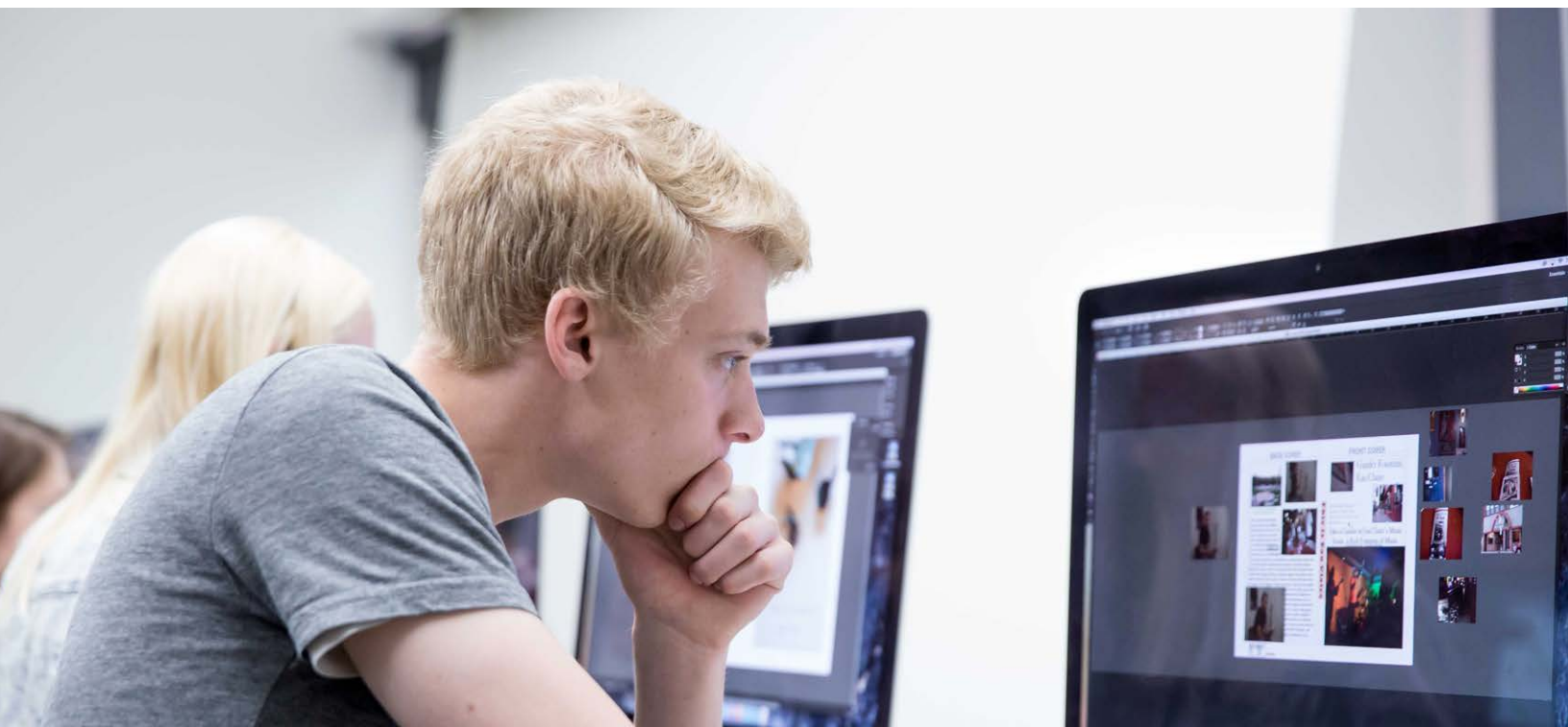
A BETTER MAC LAB SOLUTION

Technology is evolving and making it easier for higher education institutions to maintain secure and up-to-date Mac lab environments. For starters, IT can leverage Apple's Device Enrollment Program (DEP) to automatically configure and enroll Mac devices into management.

All universities need to do is purchase computers through Apple — or a licensed Apple reseller — and new Mac computers are identified as owned by the university and enrolled into the university's mobile device management (MDM) solution. With MDM and DEP, IT can set configurations for each Mac and have these automatically in place the first time the machine turns on. No more sneaker-net for IT admins!

KEEPING MACHINES UP TO DATE

With Apple's Volume Purchase Program (VPP), IT can purchase apps in bulk from the App Store and assign them to the appropriate Mac. Leveraging an MDM tool to automate the deployment of VPP and other apps is a perfect way to get the most common apps on machines and empower students to start learning the minute they log in. No Apple ID required!

For software outside of the App Store, such as Microsoft Office or Adobe Creative Suite, IT can leverage an MDM tool like Jamf Pro that goes beyond basic management capabilities and enables remote software installations. And for an even more personalized experience that equips students with the specific apps only they need, IT can leverage an MDM tool that offers a self-service style portal where they can place approved apps and resources students can download when they need them. With educational items on demand, students never have to submit a ticket or request an item, and IT isn't inundated with one-off software requests.

Through the power of automation and on-demand access, IT ensures students have the resources they need, machines are current and workflows are in place to reduce the risk of vulnerabilities — all without requiring machines to be manually imaged.

SECURE AND PRIVATE ACCESS

With many students sharing a set number of Mac computers in a lab, IT must ensure that each student user only has access to the resources relevant to them. To aid IT in this undertaking, and provide students with a consistent, familiar experience each time they log in, IT requires a workflow to streamline the binding process.

Universities can leverage MDM to bind (aka connect) each machine to the school's directory services system. This empowers students with access to their items — and only their items — regardless which lab Mac they utilize on a given day.

Jamf and higher education

Searching for a better way to manage a Mac lab is how Jamf got its start. When Jamf co-founder, Zach Halmstad, was an IT admin at the University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire, he recognized the need for better workflows to manage Mac. While there was an abundance of tools for managing Windows machines, there were no solutions for the Mac, so, he created one.

Fifteen years later, Apple and Jamf have made it easier than ever for higher education IT to focus on more strategic initiatives that drive education forward, instead of the manual, antiquated methods of device management.

Request a free trial of Jamf Pro — an Apple-exclusive management solution — and see what happens when the time-consuming ways of maintaining a Mac lab become a thing of the past. **Get started!**