

Ravenna Public Schools

The project, finished in 2001, involved deploying an entirely new district wide network for Ravenna Public Schools. The in-town Elementary School became the "head-end" site, and single mode fiber was laid to provide links to the High School, Middle School, and various administration buildings. The fiber is also utilized by the telephone system so that people can intercom with anyone else within the district via their extension number, and by the video network which distributes cable TV throughout the buildings – including 2-way video capability from any location to any other location in the district.

Ravenna wished to incorporate their Macintosh network into their legacy Novell Network to eliminate the need for separate cable runs and hubs/switches and to promote greater sharing of resources. This was accomplished through the use of Novell Native File Access Service, which was available with the new release of Netware (Version 6). Due to delays in release, the Beta version of NFAS was originally installed on Netware 5.1, then later upgraded.

The network runs at 100MB/Sec to the desktop with a 1 gigabit/sec backbone, and utilizes a VLAN to carry Appletalk and Netware traffic over the shared bandwidth. The switches handle the different protocols as if they were physically separate networks. To assist in alleviating potential concerns about network performance (there was some disagreement among manufacturers about how many Appletalk "zones" could be effectively supported in the VLAN environment), Kore / Hi Com conducted benchmarking on the original network. Those benchmarks never came into play as the RPS Technology Coordinator (John Robinson) has proclaimed that the throughput of his new network has exceeded his expectations. John also notes that the network has extended the life of his older Mac boxes, and considers the network very robust. The following are some comments from John regarding the project:

Kore / Hi Com responded to our Request for Proposal with the most complete bid package, due in part to the fact that your staff asked all the pertinent questions about our network, how people used the network and what was envisioned from the network. The final product accurately incorporated solutions designed specifically for our multi-platform environment.

I have been pleased with our new switches and file server. My biggest need is stability and reliability. After the initial tweaking, both the switches and server have performed robustly. It is rare when I have to check the equipment to see if it is causing a problem. All in all, the performance and speed of the new network has exceeded my expectations.

I have found working with Kore / Hi Com very productive. When I have requested help I have generally had the problem resolved quickly. For those items that haven't been resolved immediately, the technicians at KHC have been good at keeping me abreast of the progress.

Doug Friend and company were very patient as the project stretched out and deadlines became un-meetable (through no fault of Kore / Hi Com), and the technicians have been pleasant, knowledgeable and willing to share information when they have been here on calls to help "tweak" the system after installation.

I am reminded daily that our voice, video and data networks would not operate as well or be as effective without the help of Scott Grainger from Advanced Communications Cabling, Inc. I appreciate the time spent double checking Ravenna's expectations and coordinating ACCI's work with the other technology vendors. Communicating with the owner and others involved is critical in completing successful projects. Another thing that made ACCI's work stand out was the attention to the fine details like the "smoke stacks" into the cabinets and use of Velcro cable ties.

Due to ACCI's portion of the bond project, I am sure that Ravenna Public Schools' networks are well prepared for our current needs and are expandable for our future needs as well. It was fun and enlightening working with Scott and his crew.

Overall, I have been very pleased with Kore / Hi Com's work and I look forward to building on our relationship.

John L. Robertson, Technology Coordinator, Ravenna Public Schools

January 21, 2002