
University Leaps to Remote Education with NetBeez



With the pivot to remote classrooms, the network and Wi-Fi access become critical to the classroom experience.

At a Glance

Customer: University of Rhode Island

Facts

- Multiple cities in Rhode Island
- 3,500 wireless access points
- 320 buildings across 4 campuses
- 13,000 Wi-Fi clients

Challenges

- Wireless outages were hard to detect and diagnose
- Shift to remote added complexity and made network critical to education
- Students in dorms poorly equipped to self-diagnose

Benefits

- Channel hopping problems fixed within hour
- Network team became more strategic
- Customer satisfaction improved

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

Small Network Team - Big Pivot to Remote Education

Established in 1888, The University of Rhode Island (URI) is distributed across 4 cities with a main campus in Kingston, which lies south of its state capital, Providence. The 4 campuses consist of more than 300 buildings that were built over centuries across 1,200 acres. Its academics have been recognized with numerous national rankings. Just shy of 17,000 students study there, the vast majority are undergraduates.

The University adjusted to the pandemic by shifting to online course delivery for the majority of classes. Students in dorms accessed their classrooms across thousands of Wi-Fi access points. The network quickly became more critical and troubleshooting more complex as new problems emerged.



“Students need the internet more than ever as they’re staying in dorms. If they have issues but are unable to leave their dorm it is especially problematic.”

*Christopher Pepper,
Network Engineer III at URI*

A Surge in Help-Desk Tickets

As soon as the remote learning shift happened, students started complaining about frequent Wi-Fi disconnections and overall performance issues with applications. The problems were especially acute when students were attending online classes and taking exams. The team was unable to dedicate engineers 24/7 to monitor problematic connections in order to successfully diagnose the surge in help-desk tickets.

Students Don't Have the Needed Tech Support Expertise

“[Before NetBeez] You could spend forever [trying to diagnose the problem] and not figure it out,”

*Christopher Pepper,
Network Engineer III at URI*

The network and help desk team had limited options. Most university students are not trained to diagnose their own network performance problems. Sending engineers out to dorms to research an access point issue wasn't feasible either, not only because of the limited resources but also due to social distancing.

The team explored a variety of network monitoring solutions and decided to evaluate NetBeez. They quickly realized they had discovered a solution to their Wi-Fi problems.

“Students have online exams. An outage can be a crisis.”

NetBeez Gave Them a Winning Game Plan

Instead of investing hours troubleshooting the cause of access issues, the network engineering team had a playbook ready. They deployed NetBeez Wi-Fi sensors in key areas and collected historical data which was key to identify the root cause. The NetBeez Wi-Fi sensors discovered that students' devices kept hopping through different channels and access points. This was the cause of frequent disconnections and performance issues. The network engineering team was able to fix the issues in less than an hour.

“With NetBeez we gained the ability to determine the root cause and solve intermittent WiFi problems in under an hour. Without NetBeez it would have taken a very long time to even discover the issue after receiving a student complaint. That was a huge benefit for us.”

*Christopher Pepper,
Network Engineer III at URI*

Now students can focus on studying, even if studying online in their dorms and the network team can focus on delivering new strategic capabilities to continue URI's track record of academic excellence while protecting students' health.

Want to learn more?

Read more [2020 case studies](#) and the NetBeez [Wi-Fi monitoring guide](#) showing how high performance monitoring can help you get your network up to speed.

About NetBeez

NetBeez, Inc. is a network performance monitoring company that provides network engineers with data and intelligence to successfully manage the most complex network infrastructures. Dedicated hardware and software monitoring agents test LAN, WAN, and Wi-Fi networks from the user perspective, measuring and reporting KPIs of service quality. NetBeez helps distributed enterprises maximize the value of their network infrastructure, reducing network downtime and allowing IT to quickly detect, troubleshoot, and repair network issues. For more information, visit <https://netbeez.net> or follow us on Twitter at [@NetBeez](#).

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