



Case Study

Intel® PRO Multi-Port
Adapters
Education

Grand Rapids Community College Optimizes the Learning Environment

Intel® PRO multi-port adapters are the smart choice for flexibility and performance

Challenges Grand Rapids Community College wanted to leverage technology to provide the around-the-clock, reliable access necessary for an optimal learning environment. To meet its educational goals, the school needed to tailor its network to maximize performance and flexibility.

Solutions Using Intel® PRO multi-port adapters and VMware ESX Server* software on IBM xSeries* servers, the school is able to provide network services for both heavy and lightweight applications, without procuring an additional server for each application.

Benefits With data center space at a premium, Intel PRO multi-port adapters provide the throughput and features needed for business-critical applications while maximizing ports and helping to conserve precious rack space.

Founded in 1914, Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) is nationally recognized for both its liberal arts and occupational programs. Educating more than 24,000 credit and non-credit students annually, GRCC embodies the community college vision of making higher education widely available. The college employs a faculty of more than 250 full-time and 350 part-time educators, as well as a support staff of 650—all of whom are focused on the college’s priorities to be student-centered, collaborative and flexible.

GRCC Leverages IT to Optimize Education

These ideals are reflected in the IT department’s central goal—to leverage technology to provide students and faculty with the reliable, around-the-clock access to services necessary in an optimal learning environment. Delivering high-quality service in the most cost- and space-effective way possible proved, however, to be a daunting challenge for GRCC’s IT group. That’s when GRCC chose Intel® PRO dual- and quad-port network adapters to assist in delivering better network performance and greater flexibility to support its end users.

Intel® PRO Adapters and Virtualization Act as Dual Major

From failover to load balancing, improved throughput and server consolidation, Intel PRO network adapters in concert with VMware ESX Server* virtualization software on IBM xSeries* servers enabled the GRCC IT department to optimize its resources while providing greater reliability and





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—Ed Walker, Grand Rapids Community College

“Intel® PRO dual- and multi-port gigabit adapters provide the additional throughput and flexibility we need to better serve our students and faculty.”

—Ed Walker
Systems Engineer,
Grand Rapids
Community College

performance to its end users. VMware virtual infrastructure allows GRCC to better leverage its existing investments, maximize utilization and simplify management and provisioning—simultaneously. “We can now provide faculty and students with greater capacity in terms of online response times and availability of network resources,” says Ed Walker, systems engineer at GRCC.

The consolidation resulting from virtualization is proving to be valuable as well, not only reducing the total cost of ownership but conserving valuable rack space in the limited physical footprint of GRCC’s data center.

Intel PRO Adapters Make the Grade

Intel® PRO dual- and quad-port gigabit network adapters enable GRCC to leverage its current IT infrastructure investment while improving performance and reliability. And server virtualization enables GRCC to allocate only the server resources needed for a particular application rather than dedicating an entire physical server to each application. “Many applications do not need a dedicated box, but they do need network services and server quality,” says Walker. “Now we can give these smaller, business-critical applications their own virtual server—saving the cost and complexity of configuring a physical server while still providing excellent service and reliability.”

GRCC is also using Intel PRO multi-port adapters to improve performance of all its applications and services across multiple networks. GRCC segments networks to provide load balancing and optimized network throughput. Starting with Intel PRO dual-port gigabit adapters and now moving to quad-port adapters, GRCC has increased throughput on each of these networks, helping to improve application and network performance for faculty, staff and students.

Intel PRO multi-port adapters will also play a key role in the new remote data center GRCC is implementing for better business continuity. Combined with VMware software, the adapters will enable GRCC to address its high-availability challenges in the most cost-effective way.

For Walker, using Intel PRO multi-port adapters is a given. “I don’t have the same confidence in other adapters. Our Intel PRO adapters have performed really well, and I don’t have to worry about compatibility issues.” And for GRCC, delivering on the demand for high-performance and around-the-clock access is now achievable with Intel PRO multi-port adapters.

For more information on Intel® networking solutions, visit www.intel.com/network/.

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