

# FAST-GROWING CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS ISD MAKES THE GRADE WITH WHATSUP GOLD

## Case study

### Company:

**Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District (CFISD)**

### Industry:

**Education**

### Business Challenge:

**CFISD battled with network management tools that were difficult to set up, hardware dependent, and non-intuitive, consistently placing the IT staff in reaction mode.**

### Outcome:

**CFISD chose WhatsUp Gold for its comprehensive yet easy-to-use real-time visibility into the status and performance of their network.**

As one of the fastest-growing school districts in the nation, as well as the third-largest district in the state of Texas, the breadth of the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District (CFISD) is expansive. From 1995 to 2006, 23 new schools were opened in the District, which now serves more than 70 campuses, with just under approximately 13,000 employees and over 96,000 students.

The District and the surrounding community have a long history of implementing technology so students and faculty can be served by technical innovation which supports and enhances the teaching and learning process. It was when Frederick Brenz, Network-WAN/ Telecom Manager for CFISD, began looking at a network monitoring tool to support that mission that he found Ipswitch WhatsUp® Gold.

“When I find a product I like that works the way WhatsUp Gold does, I tell everyone.”

– **Frederick Brenz**  
Network-WAN/Telecom Manager,  
Cypress-Fairbanks Independent  
School District

Brenz first suffered through the trial and error of other products. “The difference in the network world is being proactive rather than reactive,” says Brenz. “We looked at HP OpenView and Ericsson/Marconi. In my opinion, those products are reactive. We also bought software and servers to manage Cisco network management tools where we spent thousands of dollars to do the same type of stuff. My help desk personnel had to learn about Cisco gear when they were trying to troubleshoot. It didn’t make sense to do that. It wasn’t intuitive.”

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Once Brenz discovered WhatsUp Gold's ability to monitor network performance proactively in real time he was immediately impressed. "Just by logging into WhatsUp Gold I can set it up the way I need to," he says. "Out of the box the functionality is amazing. What you see is what you get. With Cisco you had to go into each individual device to find out what was up or down, not unlike WhatsUp Gold. And when you start to look at the cost benefits you quickly find that there's literally no comparison to WhatsUp Gold - it's a fraction of the cost of other products."

Putting a proactive tool into operation at CFISD changed what, to that point, had been anything but an enjoyable experience for Brenz and the end user community. "For the first time in the ten years I've been here, we're seeing the problems before we get the trouble calls," he says. "That's an awesome feeling. I kind of smile and laugh when we're on site fixing a problem before the user knows he/she has one. In the last couple of weeks we've gotten to the point where we've walked in and no one had even reported a problem yet."

All network information in WhatsUp Gold is stored in a relational database to enable easy and efficient device management and reporting. WhatsUp Gold can easily monitor up to 2,000 devices using numerous SNMP and WMI monitors, although if only managing performance, it can handle up to 10 times that number. "I manage my HVAC on the system, lighting controls, time clocks, and security with live cameras," says Brenz. "It's scanning over 1,000 devices for us 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are so many features in WhatsUp Gold that the cost is insignificant compared to what it does for us."

Because the Cypress-Fairbanks district is so large and continues to show significant growth year after year, it's important that their technology grows with them. "When you look at what WhatsUp Gold has done for CFISD so far, we're confident it will be able to do exactly what we need it to do in the future," says Brenz.

Despite what CFISD has achieved with WhatsUp Gold, Brenz has further plans for the tool. "We want to get more intricate with the notification piece to get our automated ticket delivery for service orders tied into WhatsUp Gold," he says. "That'll be a big plus. We also would like to get into scripting and monitor the functionality of some of the databases."

Brenz notes that the CFISD community is tight-knit and when something works well in one school the Network Managers Users group is quick to swap success stories among its members. "I would think the educational market would be perfect for WhatsUp Gold - and when I find a product I like that works the way WhatsUp Gold does, I tell everyone."

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