

# How Fresno Unified School District Manages and Secures 100,000 Device Fleet with Absolute Resilience®



## CHALLENGE

Fresno USD originally turned to Absolute Software to track and trace their Windows mobile devices. With Absolute uniquely embedded within the firmware of all their laptops, IT could see where they were at any time and remotely lock them if they fell into the wrong hands. But, when the district-owned fleet of devices increased to more than 20,000, it became challenging for IT to maintain an accurate device inventory.

Fresno USD's sense of urgency to account for all devices grew significantly after rolling out a sweeping 1:1 program, which included more than 75,000 devices for students, teachers, and administrators. When the pandemic hit, the district - like so many across the nation - needed to rapidly equip every student for remote learning. And with an additional 25,000 laptops suddenly in the field, remote device management and data security took on even greater importance.

## SOLUTION

To monitor, manage, remediate risk, and gather precise insights from across their fleet of more than 100,000 devices, Fresno Unified relies on the Absolute Resilience® platform.

Using patented Persistence® technology, Absolute forges an undeletable digital tether to every endpoint. Because the Absolute agent is factory-embedded in device firmware, it can survive any attempt to remove or disable it - and it extends this self-healing capability to critical controls such as VPN, anti-virus, and anti-malware applications.

## BACKGROUND

Fresno Unified School District (USD) serves more than 74,000 students, from preschool through grade 12, preparing career-ready graduates through high-quality instruction, services, and resources. The third-largest district in California, they distribute, support, and manage over 100,000 devices across 90 schools.

INDUSTRY EDUCATION

PLATFORM 

## RESULTS



Comprehensive fleet  
visibility and control



Reduced security risk  
and device thefts



Cost Savings

## RESULTS

With the power of Absolute's unbreakable connection to every device, Fresno USD has saved valuable resources, fueled successful remote learning programs, and greatly reduced risk. Absolute provides their go-to report for inventorying, and the ability to remotely track devices – even when they're off the school network - has helped with effectively managing their budget.

“We started using Absolute reporting as a sanity check against our physical inventorying,” said Kurt Madden, CTO of Fresno USD. “Now, the Absolute report is our inventory. Some schools would say they had run out of devices, but we knew from the Absolute report that they had hundreds of laptops. We would go room to room at the school site and find them – saving us from buying hundreds of devices we didn't actually need to purchase.”

In addition to streamlining asset management, Absolute allows Fresno USD to monitor the status of security controls like Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), ensuring they remain healthy, installed, and undeletable. With no physical access to devices, the team uses Absolute Reach®, a querying and remediation tool that includes more than 130 prebuilt workflows, to mitigate vulnerabilities and automate fixes. Rather than requiring users to upgrade applications themselves, Fresno leverages Absolute to perform these configuration and management tasks remotely and at scale.

“Because we needed to quickly get devices out and into the district at the start of the pandemic, we were not able to update them,” explains Jonathan Lee, System Engineer and point person on the district's cybersecurity programs. “There was no time to set them up for a field deployment, and we had to modify them after they were distributed to students and faculty.”

Of course, ensuring the safety and well-being of their 74,000 students is one of the district's highest priorities. With Absolute providing geolocation details for every device, school officials have helped parents to locate runaway students using location data from school-issued laptops. Lost or stolen devices have also been recovered from various other locations, thanks to the automated message that pops up explaining the device's real owner when a machine is rebooted.

From device tracking and locating students to persisting key applications in the era of remote learning, Fresno USD has seen significant ROI with Absolute.

“Absolute continues to innovate and provide the services we need,” said Madden. “It's a long-term partnership, and we look forward to many more years as an Absolute customer.”

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**KURT MADDEN,**  
CTO,  
FRESNO UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

## ABOUT ABSOLUTE

Absolute Software is a leader in Endpoint Resilience solutions and the industry's only undeletable defense platform embedded in over a half-billion devices. Enabling a permanent digital tether between the endpoint and the enterprise who distributed it, Absolute provides IT and Security organizations with complete connectivity, visibility, and control, whether a device is on or off the corporate network, and empowers them with Self-Healing Endpoint® Security to ensure mission-critical apps remain healthy and deliver intended value.



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