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Readers' Choice Awards

Best School Network Administration Software



At a time when insidious computer viruses can wreak havoc on school network infrastructures, and users of all ages open their eMail in-boxes to a seemingly unending barrage of spam, a new breed of network administration tools and customizable software applications is helping school technology directors better manage, and secure, their increasingly sophisticated networks.

To help school leaders understand which vendors and products their colleagues have enjoyed the greatest success with, *eSchool News* presents its 2006 Readers' Choice Awards for Best Network Administration Software.

More than 600 readers voted at **eSchool News Online** in April for what they considered to be the best products in each of 15 categories, and the results appear below. In perusing these results, keep in mind that quality is subjective, and what might be the best solution for one school or district might not be appropriate for another. Nevertheless, knowing which solutions your peers consider to be the best could prove useful to your own efforts.

Best Desktop Security Software for Macs

1. Deep Freeze (Faronics Inc.)	31.3%
2. FoolProof Security (SmartStuff Software)	9.8%
3. NetOp Security Suite (CrossTec Corp.)	8.9%
4. MacPrefect (Hi Resolution Systems)	8.1%
5. On Guard (Power On Software)	6.1%

To create safer and more productive computing environments for students, an increasing number of schools are investing in software that enables IT administrators to "lock down" desktops or laptops, thus shielding expensive machines from unwanted attacks or software installations. In the vote for Best Desktop Security Software for Macs, readers chose Deep Freeze from Faronics Inc. as their hands-down favorite. One reader praised the product for its "centralization" and "continuous updates," calling it "very solid in keeping desktops secure." Wrote another satisfied user: "Help-desk calls have decreased significantly as a result of this application." A third advocate called the product both "cheap" and "highly effective."

Other Mac products receiving votes included SmartStuff Software's FoolProof Security, which was praised by one respondent as "easy to install and use," CrossTec's NetOp Security Suite, MacPrefect from Hi Resolution Systems, and On Guard from Power On Software. "I like its performance," wrote one respondent of On Guard.

Best Desktop Security Software for Windows

1. Deep Freeze (Faronics Inc.)	29.6%
2. ZENworks Asset Management (Novell Inc.)	22.2%
3. Clean Slate (Fortres Grand Corp.)	9.4%
4. Fortres 101 (Fortres Grand Corp.)	6.1%
5. WinShield Secure PC (Citadel Security Software)	5.7%

For Windows users, the award for Best Desktop Security Software also went to Faronics' Deep Freeze. One user called the Windows-compatible version of Deep Freeze both "powerful and flexible." Others, however, gave somewhat less-adamant endorsements of the product. "While we use Deep Freeze, it can be a major hindrance to working on machines," wrote one respondent.

Other products receiving votes in this category also got mixed reviews from readers. In voting for Novell's ZENworks Asset Management solution, one reader wrote, "[The product] can be a bit complex depending on the setup ... but it is very dependable once deployed." After using Fortres 101 from Fortres Grand, a company that saw two of its products crack the top five in this category, one school IT director had this to say: "We have used Fortres 101 for years and like it a great deal ... but we can do more with ZENworks." Though his district still uses Fortres 101 in "certain situations," he said it plans to phase the product out as administrators become more familiar with ZENworks.

Completing the top five were Clean Slate, also from Fortres, and WinShield Secure PC from Citadel Security Software. Other notable responses were SmartStuff's FoolProof Security, GenevaLogic's ProtectOn, and Drive Shield from Centurion.