Sleek device storage keeps computers humming

PowerGistics Towers recharge your devices in secure, compact units

It was an old laptop cart, painted to resemble a cow, which is an intentional pun for the acronym c.o.w. meaning "cart on wheels." The lock was broken and didn't secure chargers, leaving computers dead just when St. Joseph School students in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, needed them.

"That happened a lot," recalls Rhona Buchta, the literature and language arts middle school teacher at the K8 school. "But we recently received PowerGistics storage Towers, and they've worked beautifully. There was no need to train students on how to use them. It's very intuitive, and there are no issues of unplugged Chromebooks or missing chargers."

The vertical freestanding Towers hold up to 20 devices and chargers, and a concealed surge protector allows students to plug and unplug devices without losing cables. Devices lay flat on specially designed shelves to reduce damage, and the Tower footprint is about a square foot, depending on the model. The smallest holds eight 11-inch devices, while the largest can accommodate 20 14-inch computers. To manage more than 20 devices, PowerGistics recommends classroom sets of its Towers. This is referred to as "split deployment" and illustrates the most efficient way to deploy devices. In addition to the stand alone Tower, there are wall-mounted, desktop and new roller models available.
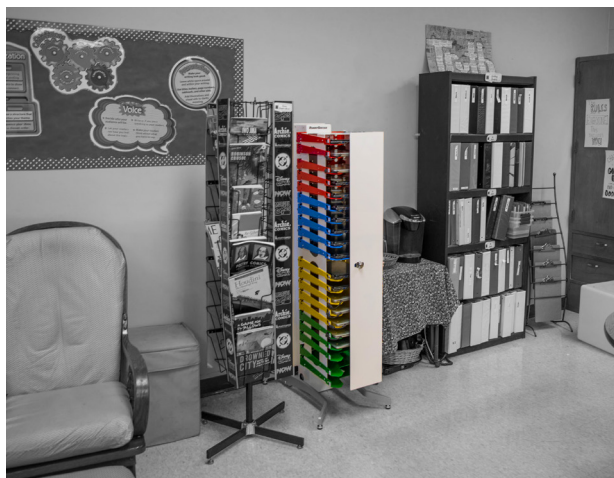
Easy access

"Each student has their Chromebook number, and they are responsible for making sure the computer is on the stand and plugged in so it can recharge in my classroom overnight," Buchta says. "The next morning, I unlock the Tower and the students get their devices, and I don't have to manage the devices at all anymore. Saves me a ton of time."

Buchta continues: "The Tower is easy to access, and we can see which computers are in the Tower even if it's locked. With the old cart, I'd have to dig around to make sure everything was in there and plugged in."

Two Towers—a second is in the fourth-grade classroom—were donated by parents who had seen teachers' outdated storage system and thought there was a better way to keep devices secure, accessible and ready to use, she says.

Cord management

"My other cart had side-by-side low shelving like a cabinet. Whether we used ties, gator clips, rubber bands or duct tape,

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the cords would fall behind the shelves, so the computers wouldn't get plugged in," Buchta says. "The batteries would be dead each morning. What I love about the PowerGistics Towers is the chargers are stable. I can thread the cords easily, and they don't fall. It's clear which charger goes with which computer, so if I need access to one computer, I can easily unplug just what I need."

Students quickly became fans, too, and the PowerGistics team has gone above and beyond, Buchta adds.

"They've been great!" she says. "They even helped me plan for the future. As my needs change next year with a bigger class, I will add a Tower and have a classroom set. The Tower looks solid, and I'm looking forward to its reliability as well."

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