



## news & updates September 2026 | Issue 36

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### The Summer Deployment Window Has Changed

*Based on an article by Matthew Cooper, EdTech Business Development Director, Cambrionix*

**More devices. More complexity. Less time.** This summer, K–12 IT teams are being asked to prepare larger 1:1 fleets and increasingly mixed device environments within the same fixed deployment window—and often with the same lean staffing levels. The districts that stay ahead will be those that replace device-by-device effort with workflows built for dependable,

repeatable throughput.

The opportunity is bigger than a faster refresh. With scalable provisioning, automation, and consistent multi-device processing, schools can reduce manual handling, control operational costs, and return valuable IT time to teacher support, learning environments, and complex technical priorities. The question for 2026 is no longer simply, "Can we configure every device?" It is, "How many devices can we process reliably per hour?"

**KEY TAKEAWAY** The schools that succeed this summer won't be the ones working harder—they'll be the ones with workflows designed to scale. — Matt Cooper

Alan Lowne  
CEO, Saelig Company Inc.

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## A Perfect Storm for Education IT

Summer has always been the decisive period for education technology teams. In 2026, however, the task reaches beyond refreshing devices. IT departments must deliver at scale, under pressure, within immovable calendars, while ensuring that devices are ready when teachers and students need them

Apple's education strategy continues to emphasize long-term value, lifecycle management, and student outcomes. As adoption grows, so does the operational burden behind erasure, restoration, configuration, charging, updates, recovery, and redeployment. Workflows that were adequate for hundreds of devices can become bottlenecks when fleets grow into the thousands.

### Trend 1: Scale Has Outgrown Traditional Workflows

Many school deployment processes have not evolved as quickly as device volumes. Common constraints include:

- Processing only one to five devices at a time.
- Relying on aging carts, docking stations, or low-throughput USB hubs.
- Staging and managing devices through repetitive manual steps.
- Separating charging, restoration, and configuration across different stations.

A workflow that was workable for 500 devices is unlikely to remain effective at 5,000 or 10,000. At that scale, throughput becomes a strategic capability. Success is measured not by whether a task can be completed, but by how many devices can be processed per hour—with stable connectivity and consistent results.

### What Scalable Provisioning Looks Like

Scalable deployment infrastructure lets an IT team move from serial work to parallel processing. Multiple devices can be connected and handled simultaneously, reducing idle time between steps and helping a limited number of staff maintain momentum throughout the summer window.

### Trend 2: Time Is the Scarce Resource—and Automation Is the Enabler

Budgets remain critical, but time is often the resource schools cannot replace. Every hour spent provisioning devices manually is an hour unavailable for:

- Supporting teachers and classroom technology.
- Improving digital learning environments.
- Resolving complex infrastructure, security, and support issues.

Tools such as Apple School Manager, Apple Configurator, and Shortcuts have expanded what schools can automate, including structured erasure, restoration, and configuration workflows. Yet software automation alone does not eliminate the physical bottleneck. Many processes still require interaction with each device or rely on connectivity infrastructure that becomes unreliable under heavy, simultaneous use.

Leading IT teams are extending automation into the physical layer by pairing Apple's management tools with intelligent multi-device USB solutions. This can consolidate multi-step tasks into a more self-operating flow and enable simultaneous updates or recovery through multi-device DFU workflows.

**WHY IT MATTERS** Automation delivers its full value only when the underlying connectivity can process many devices in parallel without interruption.

## Trend 3: Consistency Improves Workforce Efficiency

When deployment demand rises, districts often respond with temporary staff, student helpers, or extended hours. That can increase short-term capacity, but it also raises training requirements and makes execution more variable. Under deadline pressure, small differences in how devices are connected, handled, or processed can create errors, rework, and delay.

Structured, repeatable workflows reduce dependence on individual actions. Standardized connections and predictable processing allow a mixed-experience team to produce more consistent outcomes, while permanent IT staff retain visibility and control. At large scale, consistency is not separate from speed—it is what makes speed sustainable.

## What This Means for IT Departments This Summer

The practical impact is best understood as deployment capacity. According to the article, high-volume device provisioning USB solutions can prepare up to 16 devices simultaneously from one workstation in under 13 minutes, enabling deployments up to seven times faster with the same headcount.

The benefit is not limited to raw speed. A unified, high-throughput workflow can reduce manual handling, limit fragmented handoffs, lower operational costs, and give IT teams more time for higher-value work. It also makes progress easier to predict—an essential advantage when the first day of school cannot move.

**THE OPERATIONAL SHIFT** Deployment is no longer about configuring devices one by one; it's about how many devices you can process per hour. The teams that understand this are the ones that stay ahead. — Matt Cooper

## A Practical Readiness Checklist

Before peak deployment begins, K–12 technology leaders should evaluate whether their current process can meet the coming workload:

- Forecast the total device volume and the usable number of deployment hours.
- Calculate required devices-per-hour throughput—not just total device count.
- Identify manual touches, station changes, and waiting periods in the current workflow.
- Verify that USB connectivity remains stable when every available port is active.
- Test Apple Configurator, Shortcuts, restoration, update, and DFU workflows at full load.
- Standardize device handling so temporary or less-experienced staff can follow the same process.
- Build time for exceptions, failed devices, network constraints, and rework.
- Track throughput during deployment and adjust capacity before delays compound.

## Turn the Summer Rush into a Repeatable Process

The 2026 summer deployment season will reward preparation, not heroics. Districts that design for scale can move beyond fragile, device-by-device routines and create a more controlled provisioning operation—one that is faster, more consistent, and easier to repeat across future refresh cycles.

Saelig Company, Inc., Cambionix's U.S. technical distributor, can help schools and districts explore high-volume device deployment strategies and select provisioning solutions that fit their fleet, workflow, and staffing requirements.

### **PLAN A FASTER, MORE RELIABLE DEPLOYMENT**

Contact Saelig at [support@saelig.com](mailto:support@saelig.com) or call 585-385-1750 to discuss your K–12 device provisioning requirements.

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## ThunderSync Smart Hubs

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### Estimated cost savings by use case

These estimates are based on average customers use cases using ThunderSync hubs, compared to manual sync/charge methods or low-end USB hubs. These are example figures only. Customer should apply their own data and time for more accurate ROI numbers.

| Use case                                      | Legacy process                                | With ThunderSync                                  | Time saved                | Estimated annual cost savings            |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Provisioning 32 devices per day               | Manual sync:<br>3-4 hours/device<br>(USB 2/3) | Simultaneous sync:<br>30-45 mins for all          | ~90% faster               | \$12,000 - \$18,000<br>(labor)           |
| School iPad management<br>(1000 units)        | 3 staff x 2 days to<br>sync/charge fleet      | 1 staff x 1 day with<br>ThunderSync hubs          | 67% fewer labor<br>hours  | \$6,000 - \$10,000                       |
| QA lab testing 100<br>devices per day         | Sequential flashing:<br>6-8 hours total       | Parallel flashing:<br>1-2 hours                   | ~80% faster               | \$20,000+<br>(time-to-market +<br>labor) |
| Retail store<br>deployment<br>(200 tablets)   | Outsourced prep &<br>shipping delay           | In-house setup in<br>< 1 day                      | Cuts project by<br>days   | \$15,000+<br>(logistics + labor)         |
| Healthcare device<br>updates<br>(100 tablets) | Manual overnight<br>updates                   | Remote + parallel<br>updates during<br>work hours | Faster + less<br>downtime | \$5,000 - \$8,000                        |

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