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– Gus Terry, Network Engineer, ICT
Wodonga Institute of TAFE

Fortinet secures 2.5 million hours of student contacts per year at Wodonga TAFE



Since installing Fortinet FortiGate Firewalls at the Wodonga Institute of TAFE main campus as well as their remote learning sites, Gus Terry’s workload has been transformed. “Before,” says Terry, Network Engineer, ICT at Wodonga Institute of TAFE, “I was the person responsible for monitoring the network, tracking security events, preparing reports and trouble-shooting. But now, with fewer system interruptions, more accessible management dashboards, increased visibility and ‘self-service’ reporting, my entire ICT team has the ability to take care of these vital but time-consuming tasks. I can now focus on other aspects of my role instead of worrying about uptime.”

Wodonga Institute of TAFE (WIOT) is located in the twin cities of Albury – Wodonga on the border of Victoria and New South Wales. This area is one of the fastest-growing economies in regional Australia. Founded in 1986, WIOT has become integral to the growth and sustainability of the regional economy, delivering over 2.5 million student contact hours in training every year. In addition, WIOT supports remote learning centres in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania.

Details

Customer Name: Wodonga Institute of TAFE
Industry: Tertiary education
Location: Albury – Wodonga plus remote sites in Victoria, NSW and Tasmania

Challenges

- Then current security infrastructure was nearing end of life
- Lack of visibility meant that security events were poorly understood
- Network traffic had grown exponentially
- Operational management overheads were time-consuming

Benefits

- Consistency of network services amongst all WIOT user communities
- Faster, more secure and more robust network operations
- Drastic reduction in operational overheads
- Management responsibilities distributed amongst entire team
- Visibility of proactive threat detection for IT and management teams

Deployment

- 2x FortiGate 600D Next Generation Firewalls
- Multiple FortiGate 60D/90D Firewalls
- FortiGuard Security Subscription Service UTM
- FortiAnalyzer managed service from The Beachhead Group
- Professional Services from The Beachhead Group

Wanted: More security, more visibility, more speed

“Our security infrastructure was nearing the end of its licensing contract,” says Terry, “and we knew that we needed to upgrade. Our then-current solution from Juniper couldn’t provide the metrics that we needed to track security events and reporting was difficult. Plus our network traffic had grown over the life of the firewall and we needed 10GB to support our campus and remote users. And, as before, we wanted a security infrastructure that would be more accessible to my team.”

Terry and his team are a hands-on department. “We keep up with the technology and have a pretty good understanding of the state of play amongst the various security options,” he continues. “So we were able to put together a fairly detailed specification of what we wanted from an upgraded solution. We had been working with a systems integrator, The Beachhead Group, who had provided us with ISP services, an Aerohive Wi-Fi solution and Huawei infrastructure, so we invited them to tender for the upgrade.”

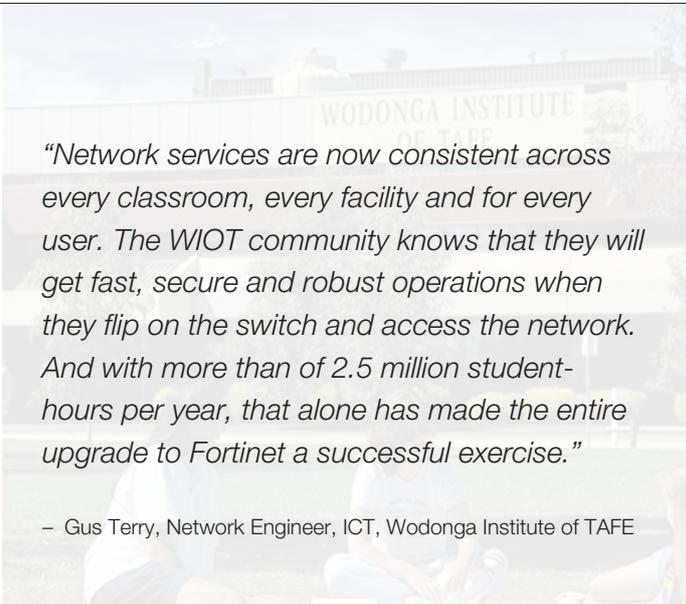
“We have had an excellent relationship with WIOT and had come to know Gus, his team and his network,” says Sean Boyd, Principal Consultant at The Beachhead Group, “so we were able to put together three different security solution options – based on Fortinet, Palo Alto Networks and Cisco – that would satisfy their requirements. We facilitated on-site demonstrations / proofs of concept with both Fortinet and Palo Alto and prepared detailed quotes for both solutions. That approach gave WIOT an opportunity to select the exact solution that would fit their requirements.”

Cost and personal service: A winning combination

“We did our due diligence for system selection very carefully,” continues Terry, “as we knew that the solution would be with us for the foreseeable future. Both Palo Alto and Fortinet ticked all the boxes as far as features and performance. But there were two very distinct advantages to Fortinet. The first was price. Feature for feature, the Fortinet solution was significantly more affordable. And secondly was engagement. Fortinet’s technical team was more accessible, more proactive and more responsive to our requirements. They went over and above to what we could reasonably expect during the pre-sales process. And once we had made the decision to select the Fortinet solution, that personal commitment continued unabated. To many vendors, especially multi-nationals, individual user sites are just another sales statistic. But with The Beachhead Group and Fortinet, we felt that we were part of the team.”

Implementation a team effort

While Gus and his team performed most of the installation and configuration tasks themselves, Fortinet and The Beachhead Group provided invaluable backup. “Over the month or so implementation



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process,” continues Terry, “we spent maybe 10 hours on the phone in total with Fortinet’s senior engineers and the team from The Beachhead Group. They talked us through some of the more arcane points of installation and gave us valuable advice on setting up configurations to support our particular needs. By the end of the exercise we were on a first name basis with their tech teams and they, in return, knew exactly what we had and how to optimise operations.”

In addition to providing Fortinet FortiGate 600D Next Generation Firewalls, The Beachhead Group is offering FortiAnalyzer ‘as a service’ to WIOT. “This approach had a number of advantages for us,” notes Terry. “Not only did it reduce the total upfront cost of the project (the CAPEX) but the hosted solution meant that we needed less processing power on-site which in turn reduced operational overheads and lessened our over-all risk.”

Reduced overheads, improved network services

With Fortinet’s ‘single-pane-of-glass’ security and network management, the operational tasks that were Gus’ sole responsibility are now evenly distributed amongst his team. “Regardless of who does the actual work,” he notes, “the amount of time we spend on monitoring the network, dealing with security events and preparing reports, both scheduled and ad hoc, has been drastically reduced. It has given us more time to work more closely with our user base. Indeed, our network services are now consistent across every classroom, every facility and for every user. The WIOT community knows that they will get fast, secure and robust operations when they flip on the switch and access the network. And with more than of 2.5 million student-hours per year, that alone has made the entire upgrade to Fortinet a successful exercise.”



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