FORTINET SECURES E-LEARNING AT CATHOLIC COLLEGE BENDIGO

The best network security upgrades are the ones that go unnoticed by users. "The only feedback I received when we upgraded our security infrastructure to Fortinet is that complaints virtually disappeared," says Sean Murray, senior technician at Catholic College Bendigo (CCB), a multi-campus year 7-12 school located in Bendigo, Victoria, Australia. "Not that we had many complaints in the first place," says Mr Murray, who had helped build the open source network and security infrastructure over the previous 15 years, "but after we installed the Fortinet equipment and straightened out a few teething problems, the phone stopped ringing. For network administrators like myself, the silence is music to my ears."

CCB's network and security infrastructure was working and working well. "We had built a manageable system that supported everything that we wanted to do," Mr Murray continues. "But we knew that sooner or later we would have to make some major changes to catch up with state of play. We had been setting aside budget for when that day came. We typically work to a four-year cycle but an opportunity had arisen half-way through that required capabilities that we just didn't have."

E-LEARNING CATALYST FOR CHANGE

The catalyst for change was the invitation to partner with a local university to participate in an Apple iPad-based pilot e-learning programme for Year 8 students. "We tried to integrate the iPads into our Linux network," he continues, "but ran into problems with providing Radius Single Sign On (RSSO) authentication to the Windows Network Policy Server (NPS) via our existing Squid proxy server. So we decided that the time was right to upgrade across the board."

"We put together a tender pretty quickly," notes Mr Murray, "as the iPad initiative had a short window of opportunity. We wanted the same capabilities that we already had, the ability to integrate the iPads into the network and a more secure, scalable, flexible and manageable architecture. We sent the tender out and received three proposals."

DETAILS

CUSTOMER NAME: Catholic College Bendigo

INDUSTRY: Education - Year 7 – 12

LOCATION: Bendigo, Victoria, Australia

CHALLENGES

- Open-source infrastructure couldn't support iPad e-learning initiative

- Older security infrastructure nearing end of service

- Edge security with realtime virus protection needed upgrading

- Lack of granular-level visibility across network impeded security policy enforcement

FAST TRACKED REQUIREMENTS

"We had already done some Apple-related work with the Sandhurst Diocese, of which CCB is associated," says Scott McKean, Chief Operating Officer of Invotec, the Fortinet Partner involved with the successful installation, "and had achieved positive outcomes. So we were invited to tender."

"The RFP itself was pretty straightforward," he continues, "as they had an excellent understanding of their requirements. What was a bit out of the ordinary, however, was their time frame. They needed everything done – specification, proof of concept, quote, notice to proceed, install and configure – all within a few weeks due to the iPad project's pending roll-out. But Sean and his team made every effort to work with us to meet all the pre-sales requirements."

"Invotec moved quickly," says Mr Murray. "We had a few discussions with Scott and Invotec / Fortinet engineers to identify the right mix of Fortinet hardware and associated software. To meet our time constraints, Scott suggested that we fast track the process by installing all of the components as part of the Proof of Concept exercise. This would enable us to begin the e-learning project on time. In essence, they set up the entire solution at the school before we made any financial commitment. We couldn't have asked for better service."

Invotec completed the installation and completed the proof of concept in four days total. The notice to proceed followed a day later.

GREATER VISIBILITY, LOWER TCO

"We were able to meet our time constraints for the iPad project," notes Mr Murray, "but more importantly we now have much greater visibility into network operations. This was a feature that we had always wanted but couldn't justify. For instance, we can see exactly which web service applications – such as Skype - are being used by which users and when. This allows us to ensure that students and staff are following CCBs acceptable use policy. Plus, with the FortiGuard Security Subscription Services, we receive all of the very latest virus definitions and updates on malware and botnets for more secure operations."

EXCELLENT SUPPORT

Since going live about six months ago CCB have had a few minor hiccups but each time they have been resolved quickly and easily. "Both times we had compatibility issues with our legacy infrastructure," says Mr Murray. "For instance some web applications were being blocked and the caching wasn't working quite right. But both times Invotec was able to provide quick resolution. But, by and large, the Fortinet security infrastructure has been trouble-free."

Managing CCB's network is now less labour-intensive for Murray and the ICT team at CCB. "It's actually made our jobs easier," says Mr Murray. "For instance, we can make changes to both the firewall and proxy from the same console. Before they were separate entities. This gives us more time to spend on other projects."

As part of the installation, Invotec provided comprehensive documentation for the Fortinet infrastructure as well as other network components. "Everything is up-to-date now," says Mr Murray, "even our Visio diagrams. We are now in a position to move forward."

PLATFORM FOR GROWTH

Fortinet has given CCB a solid platform for future growth. "We have some ambitious plans," says Donald Deacon, ICT Manager at CCB, "revolving around improving business continuity via backup software and end-client virus protection. Having the Fortinet security infrastructure in place gives us more options to deliver on our promise to be the school of choice for a 21st century education."

BENEFITS

- Successful implementation of iPad-based e-learning for Year 8 students

- Dramatic reduction in negative user feedback from staff and administrators

- Lower operational management overheads, more control over network utilisation

- Platform for future growth

SOLUTIONS

- (2) FortiGate 300D Next Generation Firewalls

- (2) FortiCache 400C Appliances

- FortiAnalyser

- FortiGuard Security Subscription Service Enterprise Bundle

- Professional services from Invotec