

Brisbane Catholic Education

“Forcepoint helps provide a learning environment in which students can engage the curriculum and teachers can deliver activity with openness and safety.”

— Simon Mackey, Operations and Network Services Manager, BCE



INDUSTRY

Education

COUNTRY

Australia

PRODUCT TYPE

Forcepoint Web Security

SIZE

55,000 Users

SECURITY ISSUE

Protecting User Activity

OVERVIEW

[Brisbane Catholic Education](#) (BCE) provides high-quality teaching and learning for almost 71,000 students in a community of 137 schools within the Archdiocese of Brisbane. Its mission is to “focus on improving the learning outcomes of all students through teaching practices and processes that are data-informed, inclusive and attentive to student well-being.” At the heart of this approach is a belief that teachers and students should access educational material on the Internet easily and safely.

CHALLENGE

The first priority at BCE is its duty of care to the students. It must assure schools and parents that children are protected while in the classroom and will not encounter inappropriate material. With a centralized system, it would be easier for BCE to implement standard policies which restrict access to unsuitable or infected websites.

“In the last 5-10 years, many malicious threats have emerged which are invisible to our users but they must be protected against inadvertently dissipating phishing, botnets or targeted attacks.”

— Mackey

BCE is well positioned to support the philosophy behind BYOD (Bring Your Own Device), says Simon Mackey. Each laptop, tablet or phone should be individually-managed but with security located on the network so that there is no new risk to the BCE business. With that said, the biggest challenge to BYOD is the classroom experience, Mackey believes, so that all students can access the prescribed material in the same way. Rather than accepting all devices, he believes that, as a compromise, BYOD could evolve into “Choose Your Own Device” from a catalogue of suitable hardware, a move which should satisfy most students and parents.

SOLUTION

Turning this belief into reality became possible in January 2013 when BCE chose to be the worldwide launch customer for Forcepoint appliances, running Forcepoint Web Security. Simply blocking or filtering websites at a local level was no longer appropriate if BCE was to deliver the best educational service. BCE needed a centralized, scalable package.



“The original BCE network comprised hardware at each individual school so we did not have visibility of 137 end points. In fact, centrally, we were largely blind to the threats that existed for around 45,000 users every day and for the network itself.”

— Mackey

Now in place for over 12 months, the benefits of the new network architecture have become obvious very quickly. With a centralized solution, BCE now has complete visibility of the types of websites and the range of services used by teachers and students. The network has seen tremendous growth of almost 30,000% in Internet traffic in the last few years and Mackey estimates that BCE will soon download almost 1 petabyte a year.

“Many businesses would not generate anywhere near as much Internet traffic as BCE. Forcepoint has been an enabler as whatever material the staff and students wish to use, their product analyses that site, product or app and it can then be downloaded and used safely.”

— Mackey

By managing 45,000 users every day, the TRITON architecture is a rich source of data on usage, trends and the effectiveness of standard IT policies. This allows Mackey’s IT team to feed valuable information and recommendations to the BCE staff who devise the curriculum, regarding the best websites for certain subjects and their ease of use. One current example is the standard policy of using Google Drive for cloud storage. Popularity of this site can be measured by the number of daily connections but students may prefer alternatives. If this appears to be a rising trend, Mackey can assess their suitability, consult the students and staff and, if required, make changes to their recommendations.

Armed with the enhanced visibility and reporting features embedded in the TRITON architecture, Mackey is able to provide periodic reports to the BCE Leadership Team and Senior Management and Executives on performance, network issues and how effectively they are identifying threats. The next stage is to put the data in context for BCE management by explaining where the threat originated and what it was seeking to do.

“It really brings it home to the BCE Leadership Team and Senior Management when you show, for example, malware has attacked our network with the aim of stealing credit card information. Telling people the story underlines the need for effective security.”

— Mackey

RESULTS

Based on a partnership of more than 10 years with Forcepoint, Mackey believes BCE has successfully built security awareness and confidence across the organization.

“Forcepoint Web Security helps provide a learning environment in which students can engage the curriculum and teachers can deliver activity with openness and safety. If they do encounter a risk accidentally, they can be assured they will be protected from that threat.”

— Mackey

Additionally, Mackey added:

“There is quite a lot of comfort in the organization, knowing that Forcepoint is in place. It has really brought security into the classroom. Teachers can get on and structure the best classes and the best content they can envisage.”

— Mackey

Success of the Forcepoint Web Security implementation is also measured in the reduced number of calls to the IT department to request access to certain sites and services. Students can visit a site with confidence and teachers can deliver a classroom curriculum, engaging contemporary learning content on the web.



“Forcepoint is keenly aware of my business and the role of education. Forcepoint technology will continue to have a significant role in that into the future. I can be confident that we can respond, like never before, to threats to our network.”

— Mackey

Brisbane Catholic Education has relied on Forcepoint security solutions since 2006.

CONTACT

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