

Marlborough Boys' College

EDUCATION

Safeguarding more than 1000 students and staff from computer threats and unsuitable internet content is a major priority for Marlborough Boys' College, one of New Zealand's largest secondary schools. To ensure control of its IT security, the College has deployed Sophos's integrated endpoint and email security solutions to protect every server, desktop and email gateway. Every computer is now automatically updated and managed using Sophos Enterprise Console.

Key facts

Organisation

Marlborough Boys' College

Location

Blenheim, New Zealand

No of users

1000 students and 100 staff

Desktops

300 Windows

Servers

5 IBM Blade

1 Windows 2003 Exchange

Sophos solutions

Endpoint Security and Control
Email Security and Control



Business challenge

Marlborough Boys' College, located in Blenheim, the principal town of Marlborough province on the South Island of New Zealand, is one of the nation's leading secondary schools. Founded in 1900, the College takes pride in its reputation for academic, sporting and cultural excellence, supporting students' learning and personal development with a wide range of resources.

The College's investment in technology is a key contributor to student, teaching and administrative success, supported by a commitment to providing a safe and secure online environment for all computer users.

Realising that the potential repercussions of a virus or spyware outbreak – or of offensive email content reaching students and staff – could spread far beyond its gates, the College has worked with Sophos as its IT security partner since 2005.

According to Peter Olliver, Marlborough Boys' College Information Manager, "Schools are unique organisations, in that the systems are often targeted by hackers, spammers and virus writers, thinking that our defences are weak. The paradox, of course, is that we have a significant duty of care to our staff, and especially to our students, and therefore must have strong defences in place."

"With Sophos we can 'set it and forget it' – which means that our IT staff can focus on developing and supporting quality teaching programmes."

Peter Olliver, Information Manager, Marlborough Boys' College

"What makes boys' schools unique is the inquisitive nature of the students who seek to push the boundaries of the computer network," says Olliver. "With Sophos security working in the background, we can allow students to have some flexibility, while ensuring both they and the network remain protected at all times."

Technology solution

The College has deployed Sophos's integrated anti-virus, anti-spam, anti-spyware and email policy solutions across all its servers, desktops and email gateways, protecting more than 1000 students as well as over 100 teaching and administrative staff. Most importantly, every computer is automatically updated and centrally managed using Enterprise Console – Sophos's comprehensive suite of management tools. Sophos Email Security and Control uniquely integrates anti-virus, anti-spam and policy enforcement to help the College protect students from exposure to offensive content without restricting freedom of communication.

The network features five IBM Blade servers and a Windows 2003 Exchange Server. The College also provides more than 300 desktop computers for student use – a mix of fat and thin client Windows computers – as well as computers for each of the teaching and administrative staff. The system was installed by AISCORP, which designs, builds and installs scalable ICT infrastructures for schools throughout New Zealand.

"Sophos is a great solution for the College because we have been able to effectively 'set and forget' the system," claims Olliver. "Sophos updates automatically in the background, without requiring any administration, and if we do have to make any changes, this is easily done through Sophos's central management console. What that means for the school is that our IT staff can focus their attention on developing and supporting quality teaching programmes."

The College also allows every student and staff member remote access to its network and applications via their laptops



and home PCs through Citrix Access Gateway. The anti-virus protection provided by Sophos Endpoint Security and Control perfectly complements the Citrix environment by avoiding unnecessary repeat scanning of files that have already been confirmed to be free from infection, thereby reducing system overheads and offering improved performance.

Olliver confirms, "Sophos constantly protects our students and staff from viruses and spyware when they connect to the school network through Citrix. At any point in time we can have hundreds of people logging on and off our network remotely, so it is vital that we can support their needs with high speed access. Sophos's anti-virus scanning does not impact on our network performance."

Marlborough Boys' College also benefits from live customer support 24x7x365, underpinned by the expertise in SophosLabs™ – a global network of high-security threat research centres that carries out 24-hour analysis to provide proactive, effective protection from any new virus, spyware or spam threat anywhere in the world, irrespective of origin.

Business results

According to Olliver, "Sophos provides the College with a solution that exceeds the standards set out by the New Zealand Ministry of Education, and since taking on Sophos we have never had a major computer virus outbreak across our network". He continues, "Furthermore, with Sophos we feel our network is future-proofed against new threats that may arise as we ramp up our internet infrastructure through participation in the Marlborough region's Loop Project, which will provide us with very high-speed internet access, in excess of 200 Mbps."

The College's overall IT infrastructure has also responded positively to Sophos's security software. Sophos's regular updates are small in size, automatic and quick, minimising the impact on the College's network performance so its students and staff can work uninterrupted, while always protected against new threats. "Sophos's integrated solution was a very welcome change from our old anti-virus product, which required our IT administrative staff to be very hands-on with day-to-day management and had a degrading impact on our network performance," says Olliver.

He concludes, "We are committed to providing educational programmes and an environment which meets the needs of our students. With Sophos, we know that from a security standpoint we have the highest levels of protection in place, which helps us to maintain an effective learning community."

To find out how Sophos products can help protect your organisation, visit www.sophos.com/products