

Wheatland School District

K-12 EDUCATION

Wheatland School District (WSD) encompasses four K-12 schools in the State of California, with a network of over 800 computers. After persistent problems with its anti-virus product, WSD started testing alternative solutions. Sophos Anti-Virus was chosen for its high performance in malware detection and ease of management, which has enabled significant cost savings.



Business challenge

Wheatland School District (WSD) covers four schools in Yuba county, northern California, and has over 650 K-12 students and 150 staff.

The WSD network contains over 800 computers, all of which have to be protected from the disruption and damage that can be caused by viruses, worms, spyware, and Trojans. Since the computers are used in an education environment, it is important that malware which spreads inappropriate or offensive content is also kept off the network.

WSD had protected itself for several years with another vendor's solution on its desktops and servers. However, following an upgrade, the schools began to experience major problems with updating and communication between the management servers and client computers. On the vendor's advice, the product was uninstalled several times and the management server was completely re-formatted, but the problems persisted. When the license came up for renewal a short time later, with a significant increase in costs, WSD decided to seek an alternative solution.

Key facts

Organization

Wheatland School District

Location

Yuba County, California

Number of users

800+

Platforms

Linux

Windows 2003 Server

Windows XP

Windows 95/98/Me

Solution

Sophos Anti-Virus

Sophos Endpoint Implementation

(Sophos Professional Services)

"Excellent performance, an easy-to-use interface, and pain-free installation – the choice to go with Sophos Anti-Virus was an easy one."

*Patrick Matthews, IT Director,
Wheatland School District*

Technology solution

WSD tested products from Sophos and Trend Micro. Patrick Matthews, the IT Director at WSD, had previous experience with solutions from both vendors. In order to compare the malware detection and disinfection performance of the two solutions, WSD put them through a thorough evaluation process, as Matthews describes. "The products were installed on a test network, and we then hit every known spyware-infected website. We also sent bogus and live virus samples throughout the network and installed virus files onto the systems' hard drives. If a product cannot work in a real-world environment, it is not worth having."

While both products performed well at detecting malware on the test machines, Sophos stood out in several areas. Foremost among these was the simplicity of management in using Sophos Enterprise Console, which allows easy, centralized administration of the entire network from a single point. This means the security of the network can be maintained without having to visit individual computers at the different schools within the district. The smooth integration of Sophos Anti-Virus with MailScanner, WSD's email filter solution, was also important.

In order to help run the install process as efficiently as possible, WSD also used Sophos Endpoint Implementation, a service package from Sophos Professional Services. Matthews was impressed with the result. "The support engineer was extremely helpful in tweaking WSD's base install and in answering our questions as to how to maximize the potential of Sophos Anti-Virus on our network. We were able to set up scripts to remove our old anti-virus software, something we had struggled with, and the engineer set up our Linux servers to update automatically".



Business results

Matthews rates his overall experience with Sophos as "excellent" and has already recommended Sophos to other administrators. He has been particularly impressed with the ease of management. "The interface is simple compared with other products, but this is certainly not a disadvantage. The reports are clean and easy to set up. At first I thought the simplicity would be limiting – I was mistaken."



Sophos Anti-Virus has enabled significant cost savings in license fees, estimated by Matthews at a minimum of \$15,000 over the 45 months of the license. Savings have also been made in other ways – the product was installed on all staff and student computers on the network without increasing the district's number of CALs (Microsoft's Client Access Licenses).

WSD has also benefited from the constant protection provided by the automatic updating features of Sophos Anti-Virus. The updates are downloaded to the entire network from SophosLabs™ – a global network of threat analysis centers covering every time zone. The network is even protected against families of viruses before specific detection is available, thanks to Genotype™ technology. Combined with the unlimited 24-hour support and comprehensive messaging functions within Enterprise Console, Sophos Anti-Virus provides WSD with all the information it needs to monitor and protect its network.

To find out how Sophos products can help protect your organization, visit www.sophos.com/products, call toll-free 1-866-866-2802, or email us at nasales@sophos.com.