

Bishop's Stortford College



Bishop's Stortford College secures USB ports with SecureWave Enables pupils to use USB devices safely and securely for school work Sanctuary

College overview

Bishop's Stortford College is a co-educational independent day and boarding school for pupils aged 4-18 years old. Founded in 1868, the school currently has a total of 1,000 pupils in its Pre-Prep, Junior and Senior Schools. High priority is given to providing staff and pupils with access to the latest IT resources.

The Challenge

As a school that prides itself on making education an exciting, uplifting and liberating experience, Information Technology is used extensively to enhance teaching and learning. Bishop's Stortford College also positively encourages its pupils to explore new technologies as it believes that using, experiencing and experimenting with technology are some of the best ways of learning.

While welcoming this approach, the school's IT department is very aware of the potential management, stability and security issues introduced when any devices, either active or passive, are able to be attached to a network. They were understandably concerned about pupils using USB devices such as large external hard drives and PDA's on the school's network, without having the necessary controls in place. Although the school has never had

to deal with deliberate misuse of IT resources by pupils, the IT department wanted to ensure that it was not complacent in this area going forward.

"The starting point for management of endpoint security is to know what you are managing" said Stephen Bacon, Head of IT at the school. "We need to know what is being attached and what is coming on and going off our network. Without this information you cannot know whether you have a problem or not."

The school estimates that about 400 pupil-owned USB devices are regularly connected to the school's network. Stephen Bacon said: "We have had no problems so far with pupils using the school's network for anything other than legitimate schoolwork. However, as we encourage the children to make more use of College, as well as personal, IT resources in lessons, we wanted a solution that would enable us to manage and audit the use of USB devices on the school's network in real time. In this way, if a pupil were to use the network as, say, a music sharing system for their MP3 player, we could put an immediate stop to this. We also wanted to ensure that no malware was introduced on to the network by pupils' USB devices."

Bacon continues: "Finally, we needed to be able to ensure that we don't allow pupils unwittingly to breach copyright laws by downloading, for example, copyrighted maps, or server based applications, onto their USB devices"

The school set out to find an endpoint security solution that would meet these requirements and would allow them to enforce pre-agreed policies if necessary.

The Solution

Bishop's Stortford College began its search for the right endpoint security product by doing some Web research. The independent reports and product reviews that they found on the Web all pointed to SecureWave's Sanctuary as being the best product of its type for securing USB ports. The most influential report, a comparison of device management products called 'Removable Device Security' and prepared by infrastructure and security consultancy Plan-Net Services, concluded that "SecureWave Sanctuary Device Control is the most appropriate choice for a medium to large enterprise requiring maximum peace-of-mind."

By employing a whitelist approach, SecureWave Sanctuary enables only authorised devices to connect to a network, laptop or PC, facilitating security and systems management, while providing the necessary flexibility to organisations of any size. Sanctuary enables administrators to quickly establish and enforce device control policies by rapidly identifying devices and then assigning permissions at a high level or all the way down to specific application per users, user groups or even a particular computer.

Bishop's Stortford College wanted to secure all 320 PCs on its network, starting with the machines in the six IT labs and libraries, which are used by pupils in the pre-prep, junior and senior schools. The second phase of the roll-out would be to secure the PCs in all of the classrooms.

Bacon comments: "Deployment of Sanctuary was quick and simple. We made use of SecureWave's free

international helpline at the start, to ensure that we installed the software on the server in the most appropriate way for our environment, and found the helpline staff very knowledgeable and helpful. We have now installed Sanctuary on the server and on all the PCs in the IT Labs. We are moving on to phase two next.”

The Benefits

Bishop's Stortford College now has peace of mind that the USB ports on the school's PCs are all being used for legitimate purposes.

Bacon elaborates: “Since the deployment, we feel so much more comfortable that we know what is

going on with our USB ports. We ask every pupil to sign a code of conduct which includes guidance on the use of USB devices on our machines and we can now check at any time of the day what is coming on and off the pins. Sanctuary's easy-to-use, yet granular, reporting facility means that we can continually monitor every machine to ensure that our acceptable use policy is being upheld, and if it isn't then we can take steps to enforce the policy. I'm sure we'll never need to do this, but we need peace of mind – and that's what Sanctuary gives us.”

The Future

Bishop's Stortford College will continue to monitor how the Sanctuary

deployment works in practice and may fine-tune the implementation if deemed necessary.

The IT department has initially set a file size limit of 200MB coming on and off the school's network, to ensure that no extremely large items of data are transferred either on to or off the network. However, assuming there are no problems with files accidentally being placed on, or removed/copied from, the network, the IT department is likely to remove this arbitrary file size limit in the future.



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