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CASE STUDY

Temecula Valley Unified School District

Customer profile

School district in southern California serving 28,000 K-12 students

Industry

K-12 education

IT environment

Over T1 lines, a decentralized NetWare network connects 5,000 endpoints across 31 schools, three of which have Windows servers.

Challenges

The district faced chronic spyware infections that degraded network performance and consumed an estimated 70 percent of technical support resources.

McAfee solution

Temecula replaced its existing security system with a McAfee solution consisting of McAfee ePolicy Orchestrator, McAfee VirusScan Enterprise, and McAfee Anti-spyware Enterprise.

Results

- Delivers greater functionality at a comparable cost
- Eliminates spyware and reduced time spent on spyware to zero
- Enhances network performance by reclaiming valuable bandwidth
- Improves distribution of patches and upgrades

McAfee Solves Rampant Spyware Problem for Temecula Schools

The Temecula Valley Unified School District consists of 31 elementary, middle and high schools in and around the city of Temecula southeast of Los Angeles. Over 2,700 teachers and staff do such a good job of educating the district's 28,000 students that the district is ranked number one in academic performance in Riverside County. But when spyware problems started to consume 70 percent of IT staff time and cripple operations, Vince Butler, Coordinator of Network Services for Temecula Valley USD, knew it was time for a change.

Previous security software provides little help

Temecula's previous security software ran slowly and offered no help in contending with spyware. Without software to stop it, the spyware that accompanied emails and websites easily entered the district's network, consuming precious bandwidth and bringing machines to a halt. Users found themselves unable to run even basic applications because of the CPU cycles the spyware used.

With 5,000 machines to manage and only eight technicians, there was no time to diagnose and eliminate spyware from clients. The only solution was to re-image the computer, which carried the risk of users losing files. Reliability was another problem. The in-place solution often failed to properly distribute and configure anti-virus updates.

"About three years ago we decided we'd had enough and called in McAfee to do a side-by-side comparison with our old software, and we found that for about the same price we could get far more functionality," recalls Butler.

McAfee to the rescue

"While the other vendors either had no spyware protection or charged prohibitive prices for it, McAfee provided Anti-spyware Enterprise, plus other functionality we considered important as part of a total solution. Yet the cost was comparable to the previous suite."

Besides McAfee Anti-spyware Enterprise, the district purchased McAfee ePolicy Orchestrator® (ePO™) and McAfee VirusScan Enterprise, providing protection against viruses and spyware along with an architecture for unifying the management, reporting, and auditing of threat protection.

The move to McAfee made a night-and-day difference for the Temecula network as well as for the staff that maintains it. "Spyware went from being a very serious problem to none at all," reports Butler. "As a result, we are spending literally no time on spyware now. I can't tell you the last time I heard of a spyware-related problem in our district."

Likewise, the district has eliminated its anti-virus updating and distribution problems. Updates used to entail a laborious, error-prone process that included setting up entirely new installation packages on the central server, distributing them to network machines, and then dealing with individual machine issues.

“With McAfee it’s much easier because ePO handles all the distribution for us, and we haven’t had any issues with Windows machines staying up-to-date,” says Butler. “Before, it was hit-and-miss.”

ePO saves time and optimizes resources

Another prized feature of McAfee software is ePO’s ability to automatically diagnose and fix issues before they become problems. For example, if a teacher somehow uninstalls VirusScan Enterprise, ePO recognizes that and reinstalls it with no human assistance required.

“Compared to other districts, we’re pretty understaffed here when you consider all we’re doing,” Butler says. “But McAfee software helps us make the most of our resources. We’re getting a lot more features and reliability without having to pay any more. It’s affordable compared to other options, and we can just set it and forget it.”

Temecula has stayed current with ePO and recently upgraded to version 4.0. The upgrade coincided with a virtualization project and so the new version wound up on a virtual server, but the upgrade nonetheless went smoothly.

“The upgrade was completely non-disruptive,” notes Butler. “It took maybe an hour, just like our previous upgrades to new ePO versions.”

The district also finds that ePO runs well even in its limited bandwidth environment, which helps ease the effects of budgets that limit bandwidth upgrades.

“We like to spend our time preventing problems, not fixing them,” Butler concludes. “I have no idea how much spyware or how many viruses McAfee catches. I just know we don’t have to spend our time on them—which is the way we like it!”

McAfee software is helping us make the best of our budgetary situation. We’re getting a lot more features and reliability without having to pay more. It’s affordable compared to other options, and we can just set it and forget it.

Vince Butler
Coordinator of Network Services
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