



CASE STUDY

To better protect users, MassBay Community College needed to adopt a broader and more effective security strategy. Sophos provides comprehensive and integrated protection for all users and eases compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Customer-at-a-Glance

MassBay Community College

Industry

Higher Education

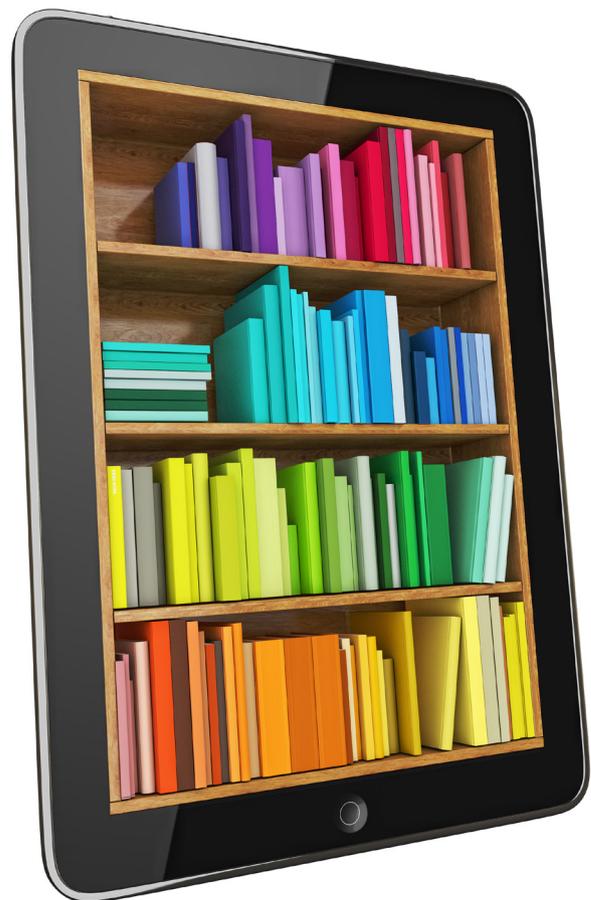
Sophos Solutions

Sophos Complete Security Suite

Sophos Mobile Control

Sophos Encryption

Sophos UTM





Massachusetts Bay (MassBay) Community College is an academic and career preparatory college in Middlesex County, Massachusetts. MassBay operates a main campus in Wellesley, with satellite campuses in Ashland and Framingham. MassBay has 4,000 students and more than 500 employees.

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MIKE LYONS
Chief Information Officer
MassBay Community College

Challenge

When Mike Lyons assumed the role of chief information officer at MassBay Community College in 2011, he inherited a Symantec endpoint deployment that was providing less-than-adequate protection from malware invasions. As CIO, Lyons wanted to ensure the best overall experience for users, allowing files and information to be available, without putting the College's network at risk. At the same time, he was challenged in strengthening the College's compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and addressing issues relating to students' use of the college network.

“Every year, we would receive cease-and-desist notices from various media outlets and movie studios complaining that students were pirating materials over our school's network,” Lyons explains. “We needed to lock that usage down and also comply with FERPA, since we often have students under age 17 accessing the network through our outreach programs with area high schools.”

In addition, Lyons wanted to streamline overall security management for his small IT team, which was already stretched thin to maintain a network linking multiple buildings at each campus. “Rather than spending their time cleaning up malware, we wanted our network managers to focus on keeping the network operating at maximum performance,” he says.

Technology Solutions

To address these requirements, MassBay has deployed the Sophos Complete Security Suite to almost 500 endpoints across all three campuses. With the Sophos Enterprise Console providing a single, automated dashboard for deploying and maintaining the entire security environment, the Complete Security Suite including mobile device management helps the College meet their goals. In addition, MassBay has adopted Sophos UTM, a Remote Ethernet Device (RED) appliance, a Virtual Web Appliance, and an Email Appliance to help protect their network.

Comprehensive Threat Protection

Since replacing Symantec with Sophos, MassBay has noticed a significant drop in malware invasions. Lyons cites a previous incident in which Symantec missed a virus that attacked student files and changed the attributes to make the files almost impossible to find. "I knew we would be making a change to Sophos so I kept a close watch of how Sophos would perform against the same threat," he relates. "Sophos went through the network like wildfire to catch and clean the virus."

Clamping Down on Illegal Activity

With Sophos UTM, MassBay has been able to lock down the network to prevent students and other personnel from downloading and pirating copyrighted materials. "Previously, we were in reactive mode in regards to security. When we received a cease-and-desist notice, we had to use log traces within our Cisco firewalls to track down the culprits, which was a very time-consuming process," Lyons describes. "But with Sophos UTM in place, we have not received a single notice over the past year. When a violation does appear, we're able to detect it immediately, track it to the user, and ban the person from the network. By heading off this activity at the very beginning, we are putting MassBay on better legal footing and saving plenty of extra work. Sophos UTM gives more peace of mind and a better set of eyes on who's using our network and for what types of activities."

Efficient Protections for Mobile Users

The Mobile Device Management (MDM) feature within Sophos Mobile Control has greatly strengthened MassBay's ability to protect mobile faculty members with school-issued iPads and to block inappropriate Internet and email usage.

Using Sophos Mobile Control, MassBay has been able to designate different levels of iPad users. Students and faculty are able to check out their own iPad for an entire term, with broader latitude to add and remove content applications. In addition, students can check out iPads from the MassBay Learning Commons Library. For these shorter-term uses, the tablets have a more restricted set of applications and students are not allowed to install more. If a faculty member loses an iPad, the MassBay team has the ability to "brick" the device and render it inactive using Sophos Mobile Control.

"MDM is fantastic – it works like a dream. It gives us comprehensive and centralized management of every mobile device as well as deployed applications," Lyons remarks. "Through only one window, we're able to ensure that all apps are deployed consistently with the right security credentials, and the ability to push a single install to an entire class of users is a huge time-saver."

Safeguarding Underage Students and Sensitive Data

Sophos Email Protection and Web Filtering have made MassBay's FERPA compliance seamless and automatic. Web Filtering ensures that high school-aged students attending the college's labs cannot access inappropriate websites and content. Likewise, users are blocked from sending sensitive emails containing student information. "Most people don't realize what a big role email plays in FERPA compliance," Lyons says. "Even a message as casual as 'Billy got an A on the test' is technically a FERPA privacy violation. With Sophos Email Protection, we're able to prevent those types of exchanges and strengthen our compliance."

Currently in the early stages of being rolled out to laptop users in the finance and human resources departments, Sophos Encryption offers a complete data protection solution for MassBay's most sensitive information. "So far, the deployment has been completely seamless. Sophos Encryption will give us the confidence we need to make sure sensitive personal and financial data will only be used and shared in authorized ways," Lyons notes.

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Taking IT to the Next Level

In its three years of deployment at MassBay Community College, Sophos has become a strategic IT partner to the school. “Sophos has taken our operation many levels beyond what we were able to do with Symantec,” Lyons comments. “Not only are our network, students, and faculty better protected than ever, but we can proactively address situations that in the past took much more time and effort. And the integration of the solutions really sets Sophos apart – the fact that they all work together and can be managed seamlessly is a huge plus for our team.”

Start your free trial of Sophos Complete Security today.

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