Zero downtime empowers students and staff at Kalasalingam University

Located on the foothills of the Western Ghats in Krishnankoil, Tamil Nadu, Kalasalingam Academy of Research and Education (KARE) was founded in 1984. It offers a range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral degrees, and holds the distinction of being the first institution in India to incorporate a Bachelor of Technology degree for speech and hearing-impaired students.

The university connects more than 4,000 users, comprised of students and staff on its network through 390 access points. Browsing habits, susceptibility to internal/external threats, and an urgent need for implementing a user-based IT policy prompted the university to upgrade to a next-generation cloud-based firewall solution.

CUSTOMER AT A GLANCE

Kalasalingam University
Industry Education
Website www.kalasalingam.ac.in/site/
Number of Users 4,000-plus
Sophos Solutions CR2500iNG SFOS-300 APs
Challenges

- Internally-hosted servers were not secured
- Inability to control bandwidth and usage for different levels of users
- Improve internet connectivity across the campus

When is it time to say goodbye to your legacy system?

The biggest challenge for the IT department at Kalasalingam University was securing its internally hosted servers, ensuring uninterrupted internet access to its user base and defining a clear-cut firewall policy for its varied users. Additionally, the university required self-driven tools and services that could ensure filtering, bandwidth management, and, most importantly, a simple user management system for students and staff.

The previously installed legacy firewall system failed to provide adequate security. After a malware attack, it became even more critical to add multi-layer protection to the servers. Persistent issues with the dynamic host configuration protocol (DHCP) prompted the need to revamp the IT security framework. Considering the redundancy affecting the IT operations and user experience, a more modern firewall setup was needed.

What made Sophos the final choice?

After an initial proof of concept, the CR 2500iNG next-generation firewall, with SFOS and 300 access points, was implemented across the university’s entire IT network.

Subramanian said, “We were very happy with the product right from the start. Its features, such as inline application inspection and control, HTTPS inspection, intrusion prevention, malware protection, secure remote, and granular bandwidth controls were the main points of evaluation. It is the perfect model for an institution like ours that has such a large and distributed user base.”

How did the Sophos solution impact university operations?

The Sophos next-gen firewall has delivered many benefits for the university. Issues pertaining to the DHCP are now absent, and zero downtime was reported with Wi-Fi connectivity spanning across the vast campus. With Sophos Endpoint in place, internally hosted servers and systems are now shielded from malware attacks.

The Sophos solution not only allows for the allocation of network quota based on user profiles, but also restricts undesirable apps and websites. Using firewall policies with a next-generation user interface, system administrators now assign high bandwidth for specific websites. More than 390 access points and 500-plus media access control IDs were created in various facilities for uninterrupted connectivity.
CUSTOMER CASE STUDY  KALASALINGAM UNIVERSITY

The university has different categories of users, including students, staff, management, and researchers, and it was necessary for the IT team to ensure the policy framework aligns with the expectations of its users. The Sophos solution enabled easy creation of more than 10,000 user IDs along with providing a superior user-friendly experience. "User authentication, application access, and credentials management are now more secure and, most importantly, offer a customized user-friendly experience to staff and students alike. Server protection was our biggest worry. With Sophos’ next-generation firewall and endpoint services, we can now look forward to a malware-free environment. We’re planning a firewall upgrade to keep our environment better protected," concludes Subramanian.

‘A major challenge for us was to put an end to the frequent disruption in wireless connectivity that affected the productivity of our students and user base. After moving the access points to the cloud via Sophos Central, we’re facing zero downtime issues’

T. Subramanian, IT head, Kalasalingam University.

Start your free trial of Sophos Central today to get started with Synchronized Security.