# SOPHOS

CASE STUDY

# The Lassen County Office of Education needed to migrate its own antivirus protection, and that of the broader Lassen County government, to a unified solution that provided comprehensive protection, easier management, and better support. Sophos provided the ideal solution.

**Customer-at-a-Glance**

**The Lassen County Office of Education**
Lassen County, CA

Industry
State and Local Government

Sophos Solutions
Sophos Endpoint Protection
SafeGuard Enterprise Encryption

The Lassen County Office of Education (LCOE) is a service agency for the 10 school districts and 4,500 students attending pre-K-12 schools in Lassen County, California. Based in the county seat of Susanville, California, the County's Office strives to provide quality assistance and leadership to each school district, and to the County itself, through a wide variety of student-centered services and programs.

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ROBERT TALLEY
IT Director
Lassen County

## Business Challenge

As IT director, Robert Talley manages a four-person team to support all Lassen County schools. In addition, the LCOE team provides contract IT services for the broader Lassen County government office and its two IT technicians. Altogether, Talley's group manages a county IT ecosystem consisting of more than 2,000 endpoints and 60 servers.

The Lassen County Office of Education became a Sophos customer several years ago when the IT team chose to migrate the schools' antivirus protection from Symantec. "Not only was Symantec more expensive, but it was more difficult to maintain. Additionally, we experienced serious support issues of not getting the help we needed," Talley notes. "We switched to Sophos, and we've never looked back."

Once Talley and his team began managing IT for Lassen County, one of their first priorities was to help upgrade the County's security infrastructure. Previously, Lassen County had relied on antivirus software from Hauri that had provided adequate protection at first, but had over time become ineffective at stopping infections. In addition, the software proved too cumbersome to manage, and the County's two-person team was hard -pressed to manage and maintain the security environment.

## Technology Solution

On Talley's recommendation, Lassen County made the decision to migrate from Hauri to Sophos Endpoint Protection. Today, Sophos provides a comprehensive and easy-to-manage endpoint solution for The Lassen County Office of Education, Lassen County, and Lassen County Community College. Lassen County also uses Sophos encryption solution for the large percentage of its PCs that are running Windows XP.

For the Lassen County Office of Education, the original decision to adopt Sophos was simple and straightforward. "Then, as now, Sophos was consistently in the top five in listings from all the third party reviewers we looked at," Talley explains. "With our Symantec renewal approaching at the time, we evaluated several vendors and Sophos was superior on price, usability, and centralized management. Most importantly, Sophos had features the others didn't, such as the ability to isolate an infected computer and keep it from infecting others."

Another critical requirement for LCOE was a smooth and automatic process for removing the previous antivirus software and installing the new solution. "Most of the other vendors promised ease of deployment, but removal and roll-out didn't work when we tested it. Sophos provided an automatic migration that was smooth, fast, and easy," Talley remarks.

## Comprehensive, High-performance Protection

Immediately after migrating to Sophos, both Lassen County and its departments experienced a significant decrease in malware infections. The change was especially dramatic at the County, because the Hauri implementation had reached a point where it was almost non-functional. "Whether going from Symantec to Sophos or from Hauri to Sophos, the increased protection was notable," Talley details. "Almost overnight, the County team went from a situation with minimal protection and poor support to a solution that's not only effective and easy to manage, but is backed by outstanding support. The County team has expressed that switching to Sophos was one of the best decisions we've made."

Sophos also delivers noticeable performance improvements over the prior solutions. "Prior to Sophos, a weekly virus scan would slow our PCs down to the point that it crushed our users' productivity. But Sophos is such a light footprint that our users don't even notice a lag when scanning is in progress," Talley states.

## Ease of Management

With its centralized enterprise console, Sophos has enabled the County's IT team to save time and effort in managing the overall security environment — an important benefit for a small IT team. Furthermore, Sophos reporting tools are far superior to those of the previous solutions.

"Before, virus updates were very difficult to manage and confirm. We had to manually spend time doing checks to make sure every node was running the most current update, in addition to the time spent cleaning viruses that got through the antivirus systems," Talley remarks. "With Sophos, management is so much simpler that we don't even have to access the management console very often. When we add a new endpoint to the network, we have complete confidence that Sophos will automatically install the most current update and provide a confirmation, and that the system will notify us immediately if it stops a threat."

## Superior Support

Talley reports that Sophos support is faster, more responsive, and more effective than the support offered by the previous antivirus vendors. "In one previous situation, the vendor supplied a patch that was shutting off services to our antivirus server. The best advice they could provide was to turn off the antivirus functionality, which of course left a glaring hole in our protection," he relates. "Often, the vendor would miss malware and wouldn't notify us, and we wouldn't receive a fix until the next patch was released. For us, it was not an ideal situation or one that supported our organization."

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Talley adds, "With Sophos we no longer have any of those problems. Contacting Sophos Support is a much more pleasant experience. If we have questions and are speaking to a technician, that person already has our case file and information. It's never a scenario where we have to explain everything again to multiple people. And, the consistency is impressive. Sophos Support is always available; we can even get help on Christmas Day if we need to."

Overall, Talley and his team are highly satisfied with the Sophos solution – so much so that other nearby county educational entities have adopted the solution on his recommendation. "I would not hesitate to recommend Sophos. My best advice is to get a demo of the solution and put it through some real-life testing scenarios as we did," he concludes. "For the Lassen County Office of Education and Lassen County, Sophos gives us the peace of mind that our network and end users are protected from malware – and our team is able to work as efficiently and effectively as possible."

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