

BITDEFENDER PROTECTS STUDENT AND FACULTY DATA

Knowsley Community College is one of the largest providers of further education in the UK. The Knowsley College network is distributed across multiple locations and comprises of approximately 2,000 PC's from new student laptops to older servers and desktops.

THE CHALLENGE

IT Network Manager Steve Morgan is responsible for ensuring the security for staff, students, and other service users on the network. Although the college had an existing three year contract with an IT security provider, there were lingering issues. "Lots of machines were picking up viruses - Conficker in particular - causing us lots of problems" Morgan recalls. The virus was causing many machines to freeze up, resulting in a situation that Morgan admits was "just chaos, basically."

Recent research has found that Conficker infected millions of machines across the UK, with large public sector networks particularly prone to infiltration.



Knowsley Community College is one of the largest providers of further education in the UK.

More than 8,000 school leavers and adults study there each year across two main sites, two high street learning shops and numerous community outreach centers.



In February 2010, Greater Manchester Police were unable to access the Police National Computer for three days due to Conficker. Once a machine is infected, the virus also has the ability to crack passwords, leaving users open to identity fraud and other third-party threats.

One reason for this is extensive student and faculty use of USB memory sticks, opening the system up to constant sources of contamination. "The problem is we cannot stop students from storing their work on memory sticks" says Morgan. "It's the best format for them to store their work as they transfer files between home and school systems. They're a necessary evil I'm afraid."

THE SOLUTION

With its high street drop-in centers and an emphasis on enrolling users in the community, Knowsley College encourages those with limited or no IT experience to become computer savvy. "It's all about promoting our services to mature students and stay-at-home parents" Morgan comments. This, however, means the system has to be very user-friendly and problem-free without being overly restrictive.

The college faced a dilemma as it entered the 2009/2010 academic year. Though tied into the last year of their existing contract, Morgan was keen to find a new provider. "We needed someone who could give us a better product, but was also prepared to give us a good price that enabled us to balance the books." Morgan and his colleagues sought advice from a local IT consultant and BitDefender Partner. The IT consultant recommended a number of new solutions and the decision was made to terminate the existing contract and deploy BitDefender.



THE RESULT

Considering the size of the network, the installation went very smoothly and Morgan was very happy with the support his team received from their BitDefender Partner. “Every time we needed to get in touch, we got a response very quickly” Morgan adds. In addition, new features not available in their previous solution have solved old problems - with systems now configured to scan all removable storage media immediately - helping to solve their memory stick issues. Since switching to BitDefender the problems with Conficker have been mostly eliminated, with machines detecting and dealing with the presence of the virus proactively - before it can infiltrate and contaminate a system.

THE CONCLUSION

Organizations like Knowsley Community College have found the value of putting a security solution in place to limit the impact caused by unauthorized use of rogue applications and exposure to malicious code. Centralized management can help increase the IT department’s reaction time to network wide security incidents in near real-time – such as minimizing the impact of a virus outbreak or reconfiguring software settings to mitigate risk. Given this new-found peace of mind, perhaps it is appropriate that the college runs regular Safe Surfing awareness campaign in conjunction with Childnet International, promoting the importance of educating young people about best practice when using the Internet and social networking sites.

ABOUT BITDEFENDER

BitDefender is the creator of one of the industry’s fastest and most effective lines of internationally certified security software. Since inception in 2001, BitDefender has continued to raise the bar and set new standards in proactive threat prevention. Every day, BitDefender protects tens of millions of home and corporate users across the globe - giving them the peace of mind of knowing that their digital experiences will be secure. BitDefender solutions are distributed by a global network of value-added distribution and reseller partners in more than 100 countries worldwide.

More information is available at www.bitdefender.com

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