

Diverse Academies enhances overall security posture to mitigate advanced cyber threats with WatchGuard

CHALLENGE

Diverse Academies was founded in 2011 and is a rapidly expanding UK academy in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire covering all phases of education, in mainstream, special and alternative provision settings. Diverse Academies educates approximately 12,000 pupils and students and has over 1,000 teaching and support staff.

The IT department like many educational establishments is small, with a team of just 13 providing, implementing and supporting the IT across the entire environment. When Rob Canavan joined the team as Core IT Manager, the technology used in the academies was not supported by a robust, secure and effective IT infrastructure and the internet connectivity was poor. "There was no common approach and there was a wide range of different kits used in different academies, which all presented major challenges," says Rob. "We also had to enhance our overall security posture with a view of mitigating advanced threats at the perimeter and on individual devices to deliver a safe, reliable and seamless online learning environment for pupils and staff at home or on site, and to meet regulatory requirements across all academies"

Diverse Academies' requirements also included sophisticated monitoring and reporting at individual academy and group level, safe, fast, reliable and controlled access to the internet from academies as well as secure remote access. As staff from one academy often help out at other academies, another important challenge was to ensure that when it came to IT and access to services, this movement was seamless and secure.

SOLUTION

Rob had worked with WatchGuard and already had an M4600 pair installed at one of the sites that was doing the job well. So, the decision was made to settle on one technology that met and exceeded all our requirements.

Diverse Academies currently has seven WatchGuard Firebox M4600 appliances running the Total Security Suite (TSS), including Intrusion Prevention Service, Application Control, WebBlocker, SpamBlocker, Gateway AntiVirus, Reputation Enabled Defence, DLP, APT Blocker, DNSWatch and Threat Detection & Response.

CLIENT



Diverse Academies
www.diverseacademies.org.uk

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
1,000+

INDUSTRY
Education

REGION
United Kingdom

WATCHGUARD PRODUCTS

- Firebox M4600
- Total Security Suite
- AuthPoint Multi-Factor Authentication
- Panda Fusion 360





"The appliances were easy to install," says Rob. "We configured all the devices to make sure they delivered the full level of control and protection. It is important to know what your users are doing and what you want from the appliance."

Since the M4600s were installed, Diverse Academies has added AuthPoint, WatchGuard's unique multi-factor authentication (MFA) solution for 1100 users and endpoint protection with 3,500 licences for Panda Fusion 360 – which combines Systems Management and Adaptive Defense 360.

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– Rob Canavan, Core IT Manager



RESULTS

"WatchGuard products simply perform well and are resilient, efficient and highly adept at scanning and blocking just about anything suspicious as well as being very flexible and adaptable to cope with rapidly growing requirements," says Rob. "The throughput that the WatchGuard appliances have to handle is astonishing; we have some 1,000 million scans every day and will typically detect six IP incidents over this time."

There are just two members of staff at Diverse Academies managing the WatchGuard appliances across all sites, but they can manage everything from a single point. They can also run centralised policies and applications such as finance. They can also group different pupils to give them different web filtering policies, for example. And with reporting down to each packet, the WatchGuard Cloud makes finding a 'needle in a haystack' easy.

"WatchGuard appliances just work. While we have high availability pairs, we have never had to use the back-up, says Rob. "We value the high security, resilience, flexibility and capacity to handle the throughput, but we also value the support we get from WatchGuard, the fact that new upgrades and services are included in the price and the knowledge that WatchGuard is actively developing new features that we will benefit from in the future," concludes Rob.



ABOUT WATCHGUARD

WatchGuard® Technologies, Inc. is a global leader in network security, endpoint security, secure Wi-Fi, multi-factor authentication, and network intelligence. The company's award-winning products and services are trusted around the world by more than 18,000 security resellers and service providers to protect more than 250,000 customers.

WatchGuard's mission is to make enterprise-grade security accessible to companies of all types and sizes through simplicity, making WatchGuard an ideal solution for midmarket businesses and distributed enterprises. The company is headquartered in Seattle, Washington, with offices throughout North America, Europe, Asia Pacific, and Latin America. To learn more, visit [WatchGuard.com](https://www.watchguard.com).



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