

THE WIRELESS ADVANTAGE: ST GEORGE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL PUSHES THE BOUNDARIES OF TRADITIONAL EDUCATION



Based in South Sydney, St George Christian School (SGCS) is a private school educating students from K-12. The campus currently houses 750 students and 100 staff. With solid Christian foundations, the school prides itself on teaching life skills as well as a comprehensive academic education.

The school's current IT landscape includes a mixture of desktops, laptops, iPads and smartphones; with students in years 9 to 12 benefiting from a one-to-one laptop program, and students in years 6 to 8 a one-to-one iPad program. Staff members also have a personal iPad or laptop.

THE CHALLENGE

Until three years ago, SGCS's wireless network ran on consumer grade wireless equipment. With big technology plans on the horizon, SGCS needed to implement a system that would grow with its digital objectives. The goal was to deploy a network that would allow SGCS to take advantage of stimulating digital content and new engagement opportunities.

For the wireless network to be successful, the school needed a system that was ready to accommodate the specific needs of a school environment. The challenges included finding a cost-effective enterprise network that would:

- Be easy to work with and ready to expand
- Be accessible with built-in management capabilities
- Allow flexible monitoring and browsing restrictions depending on the end user
- Need minimal supervision
- Provide flawless connectivity
- Feature a user-friendly interface

THE SOLUTION

SGCS started making moves towards a more technology-enabled environment, by scoping the market and speaking with its IT infrastructure partner, Accucom Systems Integration Pty Ltd.

IT Manager, Wilson Cheng, said, "We've worked with Accucom for over a decade, and from day one it's been a great relationship. We source all our technical software, hardware and professional deployment and management services from them. They really understand our needs by thinking through our requirements and making considered recommendations. It's through Accucom that we chose Aruba".

In 2011, SGCS deployed the Aruba Networks AirWave™ System, which allows SGCS to employ a user-centric approach: identifying who is on the network, where they are accessing the network, the mobile devices they're using, and how much bandwidth is being consumed by specific devices. It has given SGCS total control over the network and visibility into everything that affects service quality.

"We love the system we implemented – it's solid and delivers all the requirements we need. Further, it's more aesthetically appealing than the others we trialed. With this system we've been able to grow our digital offerings significantly and really push the boundaries of traditional education," said Mr Cheng.

THE RESULTS

"Since we first rolled out our Aruba system 2 years ago, we've grown our network from 10 access points to 45, and this is continuing to climb. We're expanding further this year and plan to add an additional 5 access points by the end of 2013. This will see our entire campus covered".

"The system seamlessly lets devices move from one place to another, without the user having to consider which network they need to join. They just enter their single user sign-on which is linked to our Microsoft Active Directory and the network is good to go, anywhere on campus". The integration with Microsoft Active Directory means that staff and students only need to remember one password to access the school's IT system.



Mr Cheng added, “Every day I see great examples of the wireless network in play. Recently our senior Chinese language class used the wireless network to access different applications to research Chinese characters and Chinese culture. Through the app they were able to learn in an interactive environment that inspired and challenged their knowledge”.

“I also often witness students around campus log in to the network and work together outside of class on projects, using the wireless connection as a research hub. It’s this type of effortless accessibility that really gives us an advantage”.

“In an exciting move for us, we also recently took classes to a new level through Skype lessons. Today, using the wireless connection, our teachers are able to Skype with students when they are sick and offsite. This enables a new degree of interaction that ensures no student is disadvantaged.

“Thanks to our partnership with Aruba and Accucom, we’ve been able to grow and embrace new technologies as they come onto the market. The wireless network allows both the teaching and IT staff to perform our jobs to the best of our ability. We’re also able to offer innovative, creative and engaging education practices that we wouldn’t otherwise have access to. It’s these tools that are really beneficial to our students, staff and school,” said Mr Cheng.

Accucom’s Sales & Marketing Manager, Natasha Babic added, “Accucom prides its self on being a leading supplier of across-the-board technology solutions. Working with a partner such as Aruba is exceptionally fulfilling as like us, their goal is to deliver a solution that enables new ways of engagement and interaction in education”.



SOLUTION BUILD:

1 x 3400 Controller
 50 x AP-105 Access Points
 4 x RAP-2WG Remote Access Points
 1 x AirWave™ Management for 50 Devices
 Accucom Professional Services
 (project design, installation/configuration & support)

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