BRISBANE BOYS' COLLEGE
Queensland, Australia

Aruba Wi-Fi offers robust connectivity to support Brisbane Boys' College digital transformation

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With digital disruption changing not only the way students learn, but also the business models behind them, modernising Brisbane Boys' College's network infrastructure to deliver a truly connected campus was a priority for Director of IT Services, Lee Pickering.

"With over 1500 students – many of whom utilise our boarding facilities – and around 300 full-time staff, we needed to increase bandwidth and availability of our wireless network to keep pace with the always-on demands of students and staff across the entire campus."

REQUIREMENTS
- Robust high-capacity wireless network to provide campus-wide connectivity
- Reliable and secure connections inside and outside the classroom
- Seamless integration with digital learning tools

SOLUTION
- 802.11ac Wave 2 access points
- 8320 Switch Series
- 2930 Switch Series
- ClearPass for automation of authentication
- AirWave for network monitoring and management

BENEFITS
- Pervasive 802.11ac-enabled Wi-Fi supporting over 1500 students and 300 full-time staff daily
- Simplified network management and increased visibility to ease the burden on limited IT resources
- Students and staff empowered to thrive in an innovative digital learning environment

"We were really happy with the support Aruba has given us - they made us feel like we were rock stars. That service has certainly been of note and something I haven't seen from other vendors before."
Lee Pickering
Director of Technology Services, Brisbane Boys' College

A TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Founded in 1902, Brisbane Boys' College (BBC) is an independent school for boys in Prep to Year 12. Featuring sprawling grounds and a boarding house, the school had a unique set of requirements to consider when planning and deploying a complete refresh of their network infrastructure.

"Students treat the boarding house as if it's their home so you're trying to replicate what they've got when they do go home. We were able to do that really well with the Aruba gear," said Pickering. "The boarders used to get wireless, but it was very flaky. Now we've got dedicated access points in most rooms, so they've certainly seen an increase in available bandwidth which gives them access to do their school work."

In addition to facilitating greater learning experiences for students, the collaboration with Aruba has seen BBC efficiently deploy and manage IoT technology to better manage security, sensors and sprinkler systems.

SEAMLESS INTEGRATION WITH EDUCATIONAL TOOLS

Just like their students, BBC takes an innovative approach to learning. Understanding the importance of keeping students ahead of the ever-evolving digital curve, the top ranked GPS College equips students with emerging technologies that will set them up for success in an increasingly digital world.

To support this initiative, BBC offers a 1-to-1 tablet PC program for their year 7 to 12 students, class sets of iPads for the junior school and interactive whiteboards throughout the college, all running a full suite of Microsoft solutions. With OneNote and OneDrive playing a particularly important role in delivering the curriculum, the strain these integrated apps put on their previous network environment was causing big headaches.

"We experienced delays and congestion with our existing infrastructure", said Pickering who was impressed by Aruba's customer first, customer last approach to customer service. "We needed a solution that would be fit for purpose for our Microsoft deployments, and the Aruba solution allowed us to handle these connections a lot more effectively."

SMART TECHNOLOGY FOR EVEN SMARTER CLASSROOMS

Innovation is a key driver at the school and it's this dedication to be on the forefront of technology and innovation in the classroom that saw BBC pioneering the implementation of 802.11ac Wave 2 access points (APs) and 8320 core switches in education.

"We were one of the first schools in Australia to adopt the latest 315 APs," said Pickering. "We then followed that with the new core switches; we were one of the first schools globally to implement Aruba's 8320 series."

With a lengthy list of accolades – including CRN 2017 Product of the Year, CRN Tech Innovator Award and inclusion in CRN's Top 10 Biggest Networking Stories of 2017 – the implementation of Aruba's 8000 Switch Series delivered bleeding edge technology that many of the more technically-minded parents look for in an innovative school.

A 360 Degree View with AirWave

The adoption of these new capabilities not only transformed learning environments, they helped realise improvements in the efficiency of school administration too. With only one administrator available to monitor network usage and respond to issues, Aruba AirWave's ability to provide real-time monitoring, proactive alerts and efficient reporting and troubleshooting has both saved time and increased administrative efficiency at the campus.

"It was taking up too much time during the week to navigate the previous management solution, and it wasn't giving us the information we needed to diagnose certain issues. AirWave has certainly delivered the amount of exposure that our administrator needs to jump in and see reports and have everything in one pane of glass," said Pickering.

Trusted Network Security with ClearPass

With more than 1,200 devices accessing the network at any given time, for everything from sitting exams to streaming content in the boarding house, security and ease of access were key requirements for BBC. To tackle this, the College has deployed ClearPass for all authentication on the network, allowing users to securely and seamlessly onboard.

These benefits are being felt in the IT department with a sharp downturn in the number of support calls received. Their previous Wi-Fi infrastructure attracted multiple support calls a week. With the Aruba solution, this has been reduced to approximately one support call a month.

"It's been a big turnaround in terms of how many support phone calls we get for wireless," says Pickering.

THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT FOR BBC

With a solid Wi-Fi infrastructure in place, the foundation is set to drive future transformations. Looking ahead, BBC has plans to review and deploy the next wave of Aruba wireless products. For a highly engaged visitor and student experience, BBC are considering the use of Aruba Bluetooth beacons to enable indoor location and wayfinding via integration with their existing school app.

"This would allow our students to find their way around the campus on any given day, as well as providing guests with a handy service when visiting the campus or attending open days," explains Pickering.

In addition, for a smoother guest check-in experience, BBC are also looking to integrate Sine - a visitor management solution - with native ClearPass capabilities to improve both reception and visitor security and productivity.

In partnership with Aruba, Brisbane Boys' College are delivering on their promise to equip students with the best emerging technologies and prepare them for the digital world.

ABOUT ARUBA

Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise Company, is redefining the IT edge with Mobility and IOT solutions for organisations of all sizes globally. The company delivers IT solutions that empower organizations to serve GenMobile –mobile-savvy users who rely on cloud-based business apps for every aspect of their work and personal lives – and to harness the power of insights to transform business processes.

With infrastructure services offered as software from the public or private cloud, Aruba enables secure connectivity for mobile and IoT — under one roof. Aruba allows IT professionals to build networks that keep up with these changes by migrating away from expensive-to-operate and proprietary infrastructures, which were originally designed for fixed network connections within the physical connections of the corporate headquarters.

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