



# Complete Visibility into Online Activity Allows 70,000 K-12 Students to Learn in a Safe Environment

This large Australian education system relies on Forcepoint Web Security for a centralized solution to safeguard student and staff online access without hindering learning.

Protecting students from inappropriate content and its network from malicious technology is a top priority for this Australian Catholic school system. With more than 70,000 students across 141 schools, the school system relies on Forcepoint Web Security for a scalable solution that allows students and staff to benefit from rich educational resources while keeping threats at bay.

**CUSTOMER PROFILE:**

A large Australian Catholic school system with more than 70,000 students across 140 schools.

**INDUSTRY:**

Education

**HQ COUNTRY:**

Australia

**PRODUCT:**

Forcepoint Web Security

Born after the introduction of the PC, today's students don't even remember a time when computers, laptops, the internet, smartphones, and social media were not at their fingertips – not just at home, but also as part of their school experience. What began with rows of Apple Macs in school computer labs in the eighties has grown into an ecosystem of educational apps, online teaching resources, cloud learning websites, parent/student/teacher communication portals, and web-based standardized testing that schools and students alike rely on.

Because technology has been so integral to their growth, young people are often both curious and fearless about exploring new technology, including unknown applications, sites, or links. Unfortunately, inappropriate websites and malicious content can be just a click away. With more than 70,000 students from Prep to Year 12, this Australian school system was struggling with this very issue on a large scale.

## An education online

Protecting both vulnerable students and the school system from mistakenly accessing inappropriate or malicious content, while still enabling a rich, technology-based educational environment is a critical priority for the system. This private school system provides high-quality teaching and learning for tens of thousands of students at 141 schools within the archdiocese. Its mission is "improving the learning outcomes of all students through teaching practices and processes that are data-informed, inclusive, and attentive to student wellbeing." To deliver on this mission, teachers and students should be able to access educational material on the internet easily, but safely.

"In the last five to ten years, many malicious threats have emerged which are invisible to our users, but that they must be protected against," said the school system's Operations and Network Services Manager.

The large number of schools and students along with the lack of a centralized system for restricting access to unsuitable or infected websites made achieving this goal challenging. The existing network comprised hardware at each individual school, so there was no comprehensive visibility into all 141 school endpoints.

"Centrally, we were largely blind to the threats that existed for around 45,000 users every day and for the network itself," explained the manager. To deliver centralized protection and visibility at scale, the school system turned to Forcepoint Web Security.

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OPERATIONS AND NETWORK SERVICES MANAGER, SCHOOL SYSTEM

## Increased traffic – reduced risk

The benefits of the new network architecture became obvious very quickly, measured first by the reduced number of calls to the IT department requesting access to certain sites and services.

"Forcepoint has been an enabler for us: whatever material the staff and students wish to use, the product analyzes that site, product or app and it can then be downloaded and used safely," explained the manager. The previous solution's rigid list of allowed or not allowed sites didn't provide this real-time analysis.



## Challenges

The lack of a centralized, real-time system for identifying and restricting access to unsuitable or infected websites made it difficult for teachers and students to access educational material on the internet easily, but safely.



## Approach

Implement Forcepoint Web Security to centrally protect students and the school system from inappropriate or malicious web content, while still enabling a rich, technology-based educational environment.

With the centralized Forcepoint Web Security solution, the school system now also has complete visibility into the types of websites and the range of services used by teachers and students. This enables the IT team to provide periodic reports to the system's leadership team, senior management, and executives on performance, network issues, and how effectively they are identifying threats.

"It really brings it home to the leadership team and senior management when you show, for example, malware has attacked our network with the aim of stealing credit card information," said the manager. "Telling that story underlines the need for effective security."

At the same time, the network has seen tremendous growth of almost 30,000% in internet traffic in the last few years; the ops manager estimates that the school system will soon download nearly one petabyte a year.

By observing this traffic, Forcepoint Web Security provides a rich source of data on usage, trends, and the effectiveness of standard IT policies. The IT team can utilize this to feed valuable information and recommendations regarding the best websites for certain subjects and their ease of use to the staff who devise the curriculum.

An example is the school system's standard policy of using Google Drive for cloud storage. Popularity of this site can be measured by the number of daily connections. If students prefer alternatives and IT sees a rising number of connections to those alternatives as a trend, the ops team can assess their suitability, consult the students and staff, and, if required, make changes to their recommendations.

### A vibrant learning environment

Most of all, the school system is happy that Forcepoint Web Security helps provide a learning environment where students can engage the curriculum, and teachers can deliver activity with openness and safety. If they do encounter a risk accidentally, they can be assured they will be protected from that threat, according to the manager.

## "It has really brought security into the classroom."

OPERATIONS AND NETWORK SERVICES MANAGER, SCHOOL SYSTEM

"There is quite a lot of comfort in the organization, knowing that Forcepoint is in place. Teachers can get on and structure the best classes and the best content they can envisage," said the manager. "It has really brought security into the classroom."



### Results

Reduced number of calls to the IT department requesting access to specific sites and services.

Complete visibility into the types of websites and the range of services used enables reporting on performance, network issues, and how effectively threats are identified.

Provides a learning environment where students can engage the curriculum, and teachers can deliver web-based activity with openness and safety.