

Gallup-McKinley County Schools successfully defends against ransomware

Malwarebytes is a critical part of maintaining a safe learning environment

INDUSTRY

Education

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Maximize scarce resources without compromising security

IT ENVIRONMENT

Data center with perimeter firewalls, iboss Internet filtering, Barracuda spam filtering, and AVG antivirus on servers and Windows PCs

SOLUTION

Malwarebytes Anti-Malware, which includes the Management Console

RESULTS

- Gained full control over malware detection and elimination
- Saved hours of administrative and travel time with remote management
- Ensured a safe learning environment for students

Business profile

Gallup-McKinley County Schools are committed to helping their students become outstanding, productive citizens in a multicultural society. Educating 12,000 students to achieve this goal is challenging enough, but in western New Mexico, distance complicates the task. The school district needed a way to efficiently prevent malware infections and remotely manage endpoints.



My nightmare is ransomware. The new and emerging versions of malware are more sophisticated now. Malwarebytes gives us the protection we need.

—Peter Campos, Network Administrator,
Gallup-McKinley County Schools

Business challenge

Maximize scarce resources without compromising security
The Gallup-McKinley school district covers 5,000 square miles. To put this in perspective, IT technicians have an 118-mile drive to the furthest school—one way. Thirty-six schools, staffed by 900 teachers and 1,100 other staff serve a predominantly Native American student body. For many students, school is the only place that they can have access to a computer and the Internet.

“Our network has to be functional, safe, and secure,” said Ron Triplehorn, Director of Facilities and Technology at Gallup-McKinley County Schools. “We want our students to be prepared to succeed as adults, and having good experiences with technology is critical to their foundation.”

There are approximately 9,000 computers to support, most of which are Windows PCs for teachers and in computer labs with



Internet access. Students also have access to iPads and Chromebooks. However, there are only five technicians, one network engineer, and one network administrator to manage all of the endpoints. With thousands of computers and vast distances between them, there is no time to devote to fighting malware.

The solution

Malwarebytes Anti-Malware

When Triplehorn arrived two years ago, the district had begun to move more applications to cloud-based services, such as eChalk, a Learning Management System and set of group collaboration tools. The district had also installed Malwarebytes Anti-Malware to add an extra layer of defense against malware and now, ransomware.

“My nightmare is ransomware,” said Peter Campos, Network Administrator at Gallup-McKinley County Schools. “We had seen a couple of attacks when ransomware first appeared, but thanks to our nightly backups, we could recover encrypted files. The new and emerging versions of malware are more sophisticated, however. With Malwarebytes, now we have extra protection.”

After those early attacks, Gallup-McKinley used Malwarebytes Anti-Malware to perform full scans and clean any infected machines. Malwarebytes Anti-Malware detects and eliminates zero-hour malware, Trojans, worms, rootkits, adware, and spyware in real time. It stops threats in their tracks, eliminating the need for the school district to manually remove malware from endpoints.

Effective detection

“Malwarebytes finds things that our antivirus doesn't find—even rootkits,” said Campos. “It also warns users before malware can be deployed and notifies us in the network operations center. It's an additional layer of security that gives us more peace of mind.”

Malwarebytes is installed on Windows PCs prior to their deployment in the schools. Once deployed, Campos uses the Malwarebytes Management Console to scan machines anywhere in the district. Centralized management saves hours of time, eliminates extensive travel, and minimizes student or teacher downtime due to malware. Users also can run scans themselves when prompted. If teachers notice an anomaly on their systems, they simply call the help desk and IT can scan the system remotely.

The IT team also uses the Malwarebytes Management Console to push updates to endpoints, manage licenses, and ensure that the most current Malwarebytes version is installed on machines.

“Malwarebytes is a trusted product—an IT staple,” said Triplehorn. “It does its job well. In turn, this means that we can ensure a safe learning environment for our students so that they graduate with a solid technology foundation for their future.”

| About

Malwarebytes provides anti-malware and anti-exploit software designed to protect businesses and consumers against zero-day threats that consistently escape detection by traditional anti-virus solutions. Malwarebytes Anti-Malware earned an “Outstanding” rating by CNET editors, is a PCMag.com Editor's Choice, and was the only security software to earn a perfect malware remediation score from AV-TEST.org. That's why more than 38,000 SMBs and Enterprise businesses worldwide trust Malwarebytes to protect their data. Founded in 2008, Malwarebytes is headquartered in California, operates offices in Europe, and employs a global team of researchers and experts.

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