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IT built for you

Case study 2024

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

We're not software developers. Compnow got our situation and talked to us in a way we could understand – and that's brought our specific goals to life.

Rachael Fairlamb
Business Manager,
Rehoboth Christian College

JUNIPER NETWORKS

Microsoft Surface

Juniper Mist, Compnow Finance & Surface.

Building an ecosystem for best practice education technology at Rehoboth Christian College.

Rehoboth Christian College takes an innovative and forward thinking approach to delivering a cloud first education technology program. In prioritising security and safety for the wellbeing of students, families and staff, it has adopted a cloud-first approach to increase the college's security.

Rehoboth Christian College pioneered the establishment in Western Australia of a parent-directed style of school governance and a distinctive approach to curriculum. It is an independent, trans-denominational Protestant, co-educational primary and secondary day school with 1000 students on two campuses in south-eastern Perth.

The challenge.

"Our IT goal is to support Rehoboth's educators in delivering curriculum to students. To make this as frictionless as possible, we began moving to a cloud first environment. And it was vital that the wifi infrastructure we put in place allows kids to connect to what they need in a safe and secure way," says Chris Beattie, the College's earlier ICT Manager.

The cloud journey for Rehoboth began with one-to-one devices using the cloud-only Intune to manage them. While users logged into cloud-managed devices, their identity still lived on the ground in the college's Active Directory. User accounts were stuck in the mud mostly to be able to authenticate to the wifi network.

Nathan Yurisich, Rehoboth's current ICT Manager, says: "Active Directory is the fossil fuel of the IT world. It's a security and management nightmare to continue propping up

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critical things like wifi."

With Rehoboth's on-premises Radius/legacy software "no longer up to scratch," the College needed wifi authentication that was "modern, secure and extendable," Chris says.

The solution.

While Rehoboth had a clear vision, Compnow continues to work closely with the school to deliver the support and technology roadmap to match its technical and business goals.

After working closely with Rehoboth, Compnow's Chief Technology Officer, Julian Critchlow said "We were able to come back with a solution that actually drove those requirements on budget, and gave them the user experience they needed, the security they needed, and the cloud first platform for their future direction with technology."

Juniper Mist Cloud NAC (Network Access Control) uses the more secure public key infrastructure (PKI) certificate based authentication that has allowed Rehoboth to go passwordless for wifi verification. It integrates with Microsoft's device fleet management tool, Intune.

"Juniper is frictionless for the user and more secure for the IT environment. The number of password resets and wifi issues have dropped. I'd definitely recommend it to anyone looking to step up their wifi to the next generation of cloud first control," Chris says.

Chris says: "Juniper Mist operates in a closed loop with Intune. And the free SCEPman version lowers the bar to entry."

By utilising device and user certificates the cloud NAC is able to look the device or user up in EntraID, determine if they are staff or student and place them on the appropriate network. Usernames and password are no longer needed for wifi authentication, "It's one of those rare instances where the more secure option is less burdensome on the end user" says Nathan.

Compnow and Rehoboth collaborated to overcome the common problem for schools as to how to securely authenticate parents into the school's apps and the online services they need to check on their child's progress, see reports and accept invitations for excursions. Rather than setting up internal tenant parent accounts, the solution was an engineering project to deploy Microsoft's Entra External ID with its separate set of rules that enables parental access with their personal email address.

"There are clear data boundaries between staff and student accounts, and external parents using their personal emails to sign in," Chris says.

Rehoboth has been Surface Gold School for many years. It currently has a one to one premium device program with the smaller Surface Go deployed in the primary school and the Surface Pro 9 for older students.

At a glance.

The challenge.

To find a cloud first solution for wifi authentication that was modern, secure and extendable.

The solution.

A Compnow partnership that provides the support and technology roadmap to match Rehoboth's technical and business drivers. The introduction of the Juniper Mist for passwordless wifi authentication.

The benefits.

- Productivity from single Surface platform for teachers and students
- Next day Surface Repair program - only 5 reserve devices for fleet of 700
- Juniper Mist and Intune closed loop for affordable wifi authentication
- Clear data security boundaries for student, teachers and parents
- Price sensitive leasing for parents and expensed budgets for the school

The products.

- Microsoft Surface, Juniper Mist, Microsoft Entra External ID
- Pre-Provisioning & Deployments, Finance

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Nathan says: "The Pro 9s are brilliant. They have all the grunt to run the intensive apps students require for graphic design and CAD work – but are still very portable.

"It's brilliant having staff and students on the one platform as staff know the lessons they prepare on their devices will look the same as the work students bring to class."

Another advantage he sees with the Pro 9s is that students can detach the cover and the rear facing camera and use it like a regular tablet to record moments in class, or incorporate videos in assignments. And the attached stylus is great for the pen work, inking in OneNote and all the Office apps.

Partnering with Compnow, Rehoboth takes advantage of its next business day Surface Repair program. "The bonus here is that we only need five spare devices for our fleet of 700 due to the fast repair/replace turnaround from Compnow," Nathan says.

The first impression a student or staff member has of a new device is important to how they view it going forward. With this in mind, Rehoboth uses Compnow's offsite provisioning. "As soon as our users open a device, it's ready to go. They just sign in and can work straight away. That translates into respect for the equipment and helps our environmental awareness and sustainability goals," he says.

When determining how to best finance the device fleet, the answer had to consider the price sensitivity of the school's community. "Leasing devices makes sense as it's a known amount in advance and the school has certainty when setting budgets. We can bundle expenses and fees. Our term fees include a levy so there are no surprise add on IT charges for our families," Rachael Fairlamb, Rehoboth College's Business Manager, says.

"Compnow did all the hard work and found us a 3 year operating lease that expenses the fleet – and at a rate I couldn't match," she says.

The benefits.

The Compnow solution delivered the outcomes, on budget, and provided the school with the desired user experience and security. Rehoboth has aligned connectivity to infrastructure with automation to make things more secure, at a lower cost and easier to manage.

Chris says: "We only have a small in-house IT team so being able to draw on Compnow's massive expertise helps with day to day problems through to strategic decisions. As our infrastructure is cloud based, they can help us out without having to be onsite. We flick them an email and the right people, who know us and our technology inside out, are on it."

"Pricing needs to be sharp, but our IT department needs to be really well supported too. Compnow isn't there to just sell you the device, they are the complete partner," Rachael says.