



Hamilton and Alexandra College delivers highest standards with integrated security from Netbox Blue

A leading Victorian boarding school is helping to maintain the very highest standards in education with an integrated security and productivity solution from Netbox Blue. The Hamilton and Alexandra College is totally dependent on a reliable IT network for everything from staff correspondence to students' homework assignments and research projects. The Netbox has integrated many of the College's previous systems into an effective time and money saving tool that also protects children from inappropriate internet content.

“At all times we have firmly believed that Netbox Blue was genuinely interested in our needs and was willing to go out of their way to ensure that we were comfortable and happy with the Netbox throughout all stages of the implementation and its ongoing performance. And to this day continue to offer us excellent support as needed.”

Peter Steer, Head of ICT, The Hamilton and Alexandra College

The school

The Hamilton and Alexandra College is a co-educational day and boarding School located in Hamilton, in the south west of Victoria. The College has two campuses – a senior school for students from Year 7 through to Year 12 and a separate property for the boarding houses, and the junior school. The College was established in 1871 and has a long history of academic excellence and a tradition of high achievement.

The situation

The Hamilton and Alexandra College has a total of 450 PC users including 50 staff members and 50 boarders, who are totally dependent on a reliable IT network. Virtually every aspect of education is connected by the network, making security and productivity a top concern for the College.

All mission critical correspondence with education authorities, including examination information, is conducted via email. The College intranet is used for students' and staff timetables, homework, policy documents, curriculum sheets, reporting and library services.

Each staff member has been issued with a PC tablet notebook. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards, projectors and LAN connectivity. Interactive whiteboard lessons are saved on the system and are available across the web. Boarders have access to the College network and the internet 24/7, for research purposes



and to keep in touch with families and friends. All up there are 300 computer systems and 10 servers that are a critical part of ensuring the College maintains its academic excellence.

The problem



Prior to installing the Netbox Blue solution, the Hamilton and Alexandra College relied on Microsoft ISA and a propriety solution from Gaia for its internet security needs. However the college found spam was still a problem for the staff. Technicians were unable to configure the internal systems to allow external access. There was no way of accounting for all of the network traffic through the system and there were grave concerns about the reliability of the system.

“Basically we lived in fear of a crash. It was a time bomb waiting to happen as far as we were concerned,” says Peter Steer, Head of ICT.

The whole system was down for three days on one occasion, when the College attempted to upgrade its system. A bug in the upgrade process brought the servers down, causing widespread disruption to every part of the school. The college was looking for an integrated system that could combine spam filtering, port forwarding and a reliable reporting system all in

one product. Staff members required a secure way to access the system from outside the school. But they didn't feel confident in the system that was in place.

The College spent several months investigating options. “Either they were too expensive, only a part solution, or possibly the organization marketing the system was overseas and lacked the supporting personal with the knowledge or the desire to go out of their way to backup their solution,” says Peter Steer.

The College was looking for an affordable, fully integrated solution that would be easy to manage. The College needed an IT partner that could be entrusted with its mission critical IT component.

The solution

The Hamilton and Alexandra College decided to trial the Netbox for five weeks to assess its suite of features. The unit was dispatched from Brisbane at no cost to the College to ensure the quickest possible setup.

“This alone impressed us, as did their product,” says Peter Steer. “They spent hours talking through the setup over a number of days in order to get it right.”

The College technical staff members were determined to totally understand and control the system themselves because they are in a rural area and felt they needed to be self-sufficient. Netbox Blue staff supported the College as the Netbox was installed and set up. By accessing the product remotely once it was set up, Netbox Blue staff members were able to provide indispensable ongoing support during the trial period.

The results

The benefits of the Netbox were felt immediately. The College Principal and Business Manager, as well as other members of staff, instantly saw a dramatic drop in the amount of spam getting through. The Netbox solution enabled staff members to securely access the network from outside the College. And the Netbox enabled administration staff to end the time consuming job of logging and billing students for internet access. The Netbox also saved the College time and money by integrating many security and productivity features into a single product.



The College has found the reporting features of the Netbox particularly useful for monitoring students' use of the internet.

"On a day to day basis we scan for individual users and destination sites traffic for the top ten users. Using this information we can then block inappropriate sites and check up on particular students to see why their individual traffic usage is so high," says Peter Steer.

Netbox Blue automatically pushes through upgrades and updates to the College saving time for technical staff and avoiding any disruptive network downtime. If a disaster does strike, a replacement unit is available. The software configuration is backed up automatically by Netbox Blue and can be rebuilt quickly in any emergency, giving the College staff further peace of mind.

Netbox Blue's professional ongoing professional support has helped convince the College that they have made the right choice.

"It is great to be able to pick up the phone and talk to people who speak English and share a common cultural understanding," says Peter Steer. "Being an Australian firm is of great significance to us."

"The people on the other end are extremely helpful and able to solve our problems in a timely manner. We have great confidence in the Netbox and the people who provide and service it."

"The bottom line from our point of view is that Netbox Blue is a great Aussie company that we would highly recommend to anyone who needs a fully integrated internet server and security appliance system."

Peter Steer, Head of ICT, The Hamilton and Alexandra College

About Netbox Blue

Netbox Blue is a leading provider of internet and email security, filtering and management solutions. Netbox Blue provides organizations with the tools to protect their network from internal and external threats, control data leakage and ensure staff use the internet productively. The company offers a broad portfolio of products and services including Unified Threat Management appliances, email filtering appliances, soft appliances (for virtual environments) and OEM-ready solutions. The company was established in 1999, is privately held and is based in Australia. Netbox Blue has a presence in 18 countries and has partnerships and distribution agreements with some of the world's largest IT providers.

**More information is available at netboxblue.com
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