CIRRUSWORKS

Case Study: Town School

CirrusWorks Enables a More Efficient Internet for Digital Learning

Town School for Boys was experiencing slow Internet performance during peak periods of congestion. The use of laptops and tablets in the classroom combined with online learning programs, video and cloud storage applications was resulting in poor internet performance, often times causing as much as 25% of classroom time wasted trying to upload or download files. With limited budget and IT resources, the school needed a cost-effective, easy to manage solution that would start working immediately.

Overview

Founded in 1939, Town School for Boys is an independent, all boys' day school for Grades K-8 located in San Francisco, CA. As an all boys' school, Town provides a rich, challenging and rigorous educational experience that addresses the distinctive energy levels and developmental styles of boys. Town values being a diverse community that nurtures integrity, sensitivity and respect in its boys, and prepares them to become productive and contributing members of an ever-changing world.

Challenges

The Town School for Boys, which serves about 400 students and 85 faculty and staff, has adopted the use of tablets to support digital learning in the classroom. Using tablets, students often develop presentations that include videos, pictures, and music. As a result, the presentations can be very large, often exceeding 100 MB per file. Since most of the presentations are stored in the cloud, there is a lot of network congestion on the LAN circuit. This congestion, in turn, consumed valuable classroom time – frustrating both teachers and students.

"Classes are often only 20-30 minutes, so the 5-minute delays due to slow Internet performance or inability to transfer files between students and teachers, significantly cuts into classroom time." said Edgar Liu, IT Director, Town School.

Tablet-based learning programs – along with cloud-based storage, online testing, and digital white boards – have all placed increasing demands on the LAN circuit, especially during the hours of 9 to 11 am, when classrooms are almost 100% full. The school's existing 100 MB circuit alone was not large enough. As a result, IT became overwhelmed with support calls.

When looking for a solution to these challenges, several were considered, including: adding bandwidth, rate capping, web filters, and policy managers. Purchasing additional bandwidth was expensive and simply didn't solve the problem – especially during periods of peak congestion. Even if they doubled or tripled the size of their circuit, demands placed on the local circuit often exceeded supply.

Rate capping was eliminated as a solution because they did not want to unilaterally limit performance across the user base, which could result in unwanted latency. Faculty wanted unrestricted access to the Internet, so traditional forms of site restriction and filtering were not considered.

Town School for Boys

EDUCATING BOYS SINCE 1939

SUMMARY

Industry

- Education

Number of Users

- Nearly 500 users; 400 students, 85 faculty and staff

Challenges

- Large file transfers and use of in-class-room tablets causing network delays
- Service calls increasing, especially on weekdays from 9 to 11 am.
- Existing router's packet shaping solution caused additional latency

Solution

- Improve network performance without adding bandwidth with the CirrusWorks Governor

Results

- Minimized impact of downloads, especially during peak usage periods
- Bandwidth allocated fairly without capping performance
- Unfettered access to the Internet across all users
- More consistent, smoother network performance
- Eliminated support calls associated with Internet performance

Solution

Town School needed a solution that addressed the challenges associated with network performance during periods of peak congestion. They needed a solution that wouldn't increase operating expenses or require ongoing configuration, and would dynamically adjust bandwidth utilization in real time to ensure a smooth, consistent network experience.

They sought to minimize the impact of large downloads and uploads during peak usage periods. They needed to allocate bandwidth fairly across all applications and users, and it was mandatory that the solution could be implemented quickly without training or added overhead.

After evaluating several options, the Town School implemented the only cost-effective solution that could provide immediate results. The zero-configuration, dynamic and automated CirrusWorks Governor provided the ideal cost-effective solution that optimized the bandwidth Town School already had.

Results

Within minutes of installing the CirrusWorks Governor, the School's network performance improved. Through the CirrusWorks' user interface, IT staff can see how network offenders or 'hogs' are no longer taking their unfair share of bandwidth. Network usage smoothed out and support calls into IT have declined dramatically. Town School is maximizing its existing circuit – saving the school time and money. Adoption of digital learning programs has improved, and time spent waiting on the network has been kept to a minimum.

"Since we installed the CirrusWorks Governor, our network is super smooth and stabilized, and service calls are noticeably down. We have fewer interruptions and faculty and students are getting more out of our digital learning devices and programs," noted Liu.

ABOUT CIRRUSWORKS

CirrusWorks™ is the leader in dynamic bandwidth management. The CirrusWorks Governor™ optimizes traffic during peak congestion periods to ensure fast and reliable Internet performance for all users. Only CirrusWorks employs AutoAlgorithms™ that adapt to unpredictable traffic patterns in real time, without the need to pre-configure static rule sets or policies. For more information, visit www.cirrusworks.net.

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—EDGAR LIU, IT DIRECTOR, TOWN SCHOOL

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