Morgan County School District and Infoblox Take a Cloud-Based Approach to Distance Learning

THE CUSTOMER - MORGAN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Morgan County School District is a public district located in Morgan, Utah.

The PreK-12 district provides free, public education and services to more than 3,000 students across five schools. The Morgan County School District community stands united in the pursuit of educational excellence and the attainment of its mission: to create a challenging learning environment that provides for growth and emphasizes literacy and numeracy.

Network Operations Manager Ven Savage has spent over 15 years specializing in networking practices, DNS, and DNS Security. He has extensive experience in training, network design, and troubleshooting, including over 15 years of working closely with Infoblox in an education and training capacity. In 2012, he began helping the Morgan School District improve IT and cybersecurity across its entire network.

THE CHALLENGE

Protecting Users Through Filtering While Weeding out False Positives

Morgan School District has several long-term initiatives to improve and streamline cybersecurity and content filtering. The district sought to migrate its IT infrastructure to the cloud and enhance its overall cybersecurity posture districtwide. It also needed to simplify processes and reduce workload for its small IT team. Finally, Morgan School District wanted to quickly implement a more robust and reliable solution that would eliminate false positives and keep students and users safe online, even as they learn from home during the COVID-19 quarantine.

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Ven Savage
Network Operations Manager
Morgan County School District

THE SOLUTION

A Cloud-Based Approach to Content Filtering

The school district looked to migrate its IT infrastructure and applications to the cloud while also maintaining some local control over services, such as DNS firewall, to implement better content filtering and eliminate false positives. The district already had NIOS DDI and cloud-based cybersecurity solutions in place before implementing BloxOne Threat Defense.

Morgan School District strongly understands that content filtering is essential to any IT strategy in the Education sector. It protects students, faculty, and staff from accessing inappropriate or harmful content online, and it keeps highly sensitive data safe. Filtering is especially important in a school environment because it can help protect children from cyberbullying, pornography, gambling websites, and more.

Savage explains, "Filtering products for schools typically aren't great, and the ones we've had in place aren't enough for our schools. We spent so much time dealing with so many false positives. I set up our filtering to happen at the DNS level, which is different from other solutions. It's more effective and successful at eliminating false positives. We used to have false positives 8-10 times per day. Now, after making a few minor tweaks, my team has dealt with only one false positive in six months since implementing BloxOne Threat Defense. We had that one fixed in about 5 minutes."

THE RESULTS

A Simplified Solution that Goes Beyond Threat Removal to Threat Protection

The district has also successfully simplified its IT processes and reduced workload for its small IT team. Being able to manage all applications and services through a single pane of glass helps the team focus on priority tasks and improve the user experience. For example, the IT team is able to keep the district's large network up and running and can scale and pivot to protect users anywhere. With Infoblox's cloud-based solution, the school district is also able to get rid of multiple other security devices and tools, simplifying everything to one solution: NIOS DDI.

Savage continues, "I want to see things work and stay working. The more IT teams can make tasks invisible to the end user, especially in a K-12 environment, the better the solution implementation will be received by users and by everyone. The beauty of Infoblox is that it simplifies my team's entire setup. I can manage everything from a single pane of glass and better protect our students, faculty, and staff – and my own family - now working from home."

Schools around the globe are finding different ways to overcome barriers to online learning and teach students remotely. Though they are overseen by the Utah State Board of Education (USBE), school districts in Utah have a great amount of decision-making authority over how their schools operate. Therefore, the district is able to take a unique approach to distance learning, districtwide.

Customer: **Morgan County School District**
Industry: **Education**
Location: **Morgan, Utah**

OBJECTIVES:

- Migrate to the cloud
- Improve overall cybersecurity posture
- Eliminate false positives with a more robust, reliable solution

RESULTS:

- Reduction in false positives from 8 - 10 per day to one in six months
- Ability to scale and protect users anywhere
- Simplified network of security devices and tools

PRODUCTS:

- BloxOne Threat Defense

The school district currently has all students learning from home during the COVID-19 quarantine. Savage explains, "Coronavirus forced us to issue take-home devices, which we don't typically do. Once our schools were shut down, we immediately began issuing Chromebooks to families. We went from issuing zero take-home devices to issuing 750 devices in just three days. Content filtering has remained our primary challenge. Data privacy laws require school devices be filtered the exact same way, no matter where students are using them."

Morgan County School District's IT team is also communicating with other school districts and urging them to implement cloud-based filtering tools. Savage is leading the charge to take cybersecurity in Utah's education sector beyond threat removal to the next level of threat protection.

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Corporate Headquarters
2390 Mission College Blvd, Ste. 501
Santa Clara, CA 95054

+1.408.986.4000
www.infoblox.com