

Nominee: Dixons City Academy/Barracuda Networks

Supporting Vendor: Barracuda Networks

Nomination title: Dixons City Academy IT department saves 37 man-days a year with Barracuda Backup

Introduction

As one of an increasing number of City Technology Academies in England, Dixons City Academy in Bradford is a high-achieving school specialising in performing arts, vocational careers and design technology. Regularly rated among the top ten national state schools for its students' achievements, its success is built on a contemporary hi-tech learning environment. With almost 800 operational PCs and Macs, protecting the Academy's data through the integrity and reliability of its back-up service is paramount.

Driving change

Describing the use of back-up in an education environment Victor Freeburn, network manager at Dixon City Academy said: *"In a school environment the pupils are constantly losing documents and accidentally saving over files. With the old solution, pupils would report a problem and the files would be recovered within a couple of days – not great if they were on a deadline. Additionally new procedures meant off-site storage was deemed critical for disaster recovery and business continuity purposes, so preventing data loss had to be addressed."*

Freeburn's key requirements were to find a solution that:

- would enable on and off-site back-up and storage
- was easy to use
- allowed fast retrieval and re-instatement of data
- would improve efficiency while lowering costs, in particular user licensing costs.

User numbers are particularly fluid in education and Freeburn wanted to gain control of increasing server/licensing charges.

Finding the right solution

With these requirements in mind, and after assessing the best back-up solutions on the market, Freeburn selected a number of Barracuda Networks' back-up appliances to run a trial. Different devices were selected which catered for the differing needs from each of the distributed sites. *"One of the main attractions of using Barracuda Backup was the ease of use,"* said Freeburn. *"They all used the same user interface and logic so when you know how to use one solution, you can use all the other solutions with minimum training. They can also be managed from one central console – a huge benefit when dealing with multiple sites."*

Freeburn selected Barracuda Backup, Model 390, Model 690, Model 890 and its Cloud storage back-up service. When the three month trial came to an end and after seeking advice from its local and preferred IT partner, Complete IT Systems, he had no hesitation in staying with Barracuda Networks.

Describing his decision to go with Barracuda Networks, Freeburn said: *“No one else came close to Barracuda Networks with its fast speed of deployment, ease-of-use and ability to back-up different technologies. It was by far the best solution.”*

The excellent products from Barracuda Networks were complemented by the Complete IT Systems team. Freeburn said: *“The Complete IT Systems personnel were fantastic, and the roll-out went really smoothly. Once the hardware was delivered, Complete IT Systems had it set-up within minutes. Other supplier’ solutions would have taken much longer, some would even have taken days. The solution is simple to manage and very cost effective.”*

On-site and in the cloud

The final solution involved data back-up both on-site on a local Barracuda appliance, across sites to another Barracuda device, and in the cloud as a further contingency. The multiple site, multiple-back-up appliances strategy means that the data can be replicated between the appliances. Each then acts as an additional Disaster Recovery (DR) facility, with all back-ups finally aggregated on the main site through cloud replication. This configuration also speeds up re-instatement of files should recovery be needed.

Reaping the benefits

Describing the old back-up process, Freeburn said: *“We used tapes to back-up locally and I would have to remember to take them away every night and bring in new cartridges every morning. The new solution has automated this process, saving me an hour a day, which equates to over 37 days a year allowing me to spend time on more strategic IT matters. It also happens automatically which is a huge weight off my mind. Tapes have a tendency to fail regularly.”*

Freeburn is also particularly pleased with Barracuda Networks’ licensing policy. He said, *“One of my aims was to reduce the cost of our IT services and Barracuda has an unusual licensing policy which means there is no ‘per server or per application’ charges that most of its competitors apply. It means we can add as many users or applications to the servers without having to purchase additional licenses. The only thing which constrains us is the ‘natural’ limit of the device.”*

Contemplating the future of Dixon City’s IT security, Freeburn said, *“Barracuda Backup solution has continually exceeded my expectations across the Academy’s sites. The four main advantages it has delivered are its simplicity to deploy, its ease of management, increased performance and the reduction in licensing costs. Now we have an industry leading solution whilst reducing our costs and increasing our efficiency.”*

Why nominee should win:

The efficiencies are immediate and tangible:

- Data integrity thanks to multi-site, multi-backup strategy
- IT team savings: licensing costs and time-wise, 37 man-days annually
- Major overhaul, minimal disruption: set-up in minutes
- Exceptionally easy to use.