

CASE STUDY

Exinda Helps The Glennie School Control Social Media Traffic & Guarantee Performance of SaaS Learning Apps

The Glennie School



GFI Software™



About the Client



The Glennie School is a private day and boarding school for girls in Toowoomba, Queensland, offering a dynamic learning and living environment for over 800 students from Kindergarten to Year 12. Glennie is known for its outstanding facilities, education, pastoral care programs and commitment to continual development of technology in the classroom, offering an enhanced learning experience for its students with a 1:1 notebook computing program and an array of curriculum-based applications to foster collaborative learning in and out of the classroom. When The Glennie School's IT department needed better visibility and control over their network traffic than their existing firewall could offer, they turned to Exinda for help.



The Challenge

"YouTube is used heavily in the Middle and Senior Years which can take a toll on the network. Generally we see our connection peaking at 150 Mbps during the daytime."

— Matthew Russell, IT Manager, The Glennie School

The Glennie School is an early adopter of technology in the classroom and has been running a 1:1 notebook computer program since 1996. At peak times, the wireless network must support the devices and activities of 800 students, 100 staff, 700 parents and a number of visitors and guest speakers. The use of technology is fully integrated into the school's curriculum and bandwidth intensive streaming services such as YouTube and ClickView are used regularly for in-class video instruction. Additionally, Glennie has invested in many cloud-based educational applications in recent years such as Google Apps for Education, YourTutor, and Mathletics, which are mission-critical and must perform reliably at all times. The Glennie School's IT department is closely aligned with the school's pastoral care program, and the two teams work collaboratively to ensure a safe and secure online experience for the students, which involves limiting social media use during school hours in accordance with the school's acceptable use policy. To enforce appropriate use of the school's network, IT staff was previously using a firewall to block traffic on a global level, but could not control traffic at a user or group level with their firewall, nor could they provide a fair share of bandwidth to each user with the firewall's limited QoS capability.

✓ Controlled social media during school hours

✓ Guaranteed bandwidth to learning applications



The Solution

“Exinda was one of the first solutions we could find that offered layer 7 application definitions for web traffic and allowed us to apply blocking rules for Active Directory users and groups without having to set proxy settings in the browser. Exinda is very intuitive to configure and use compared to other products and provides great insight into the network.”

— Matthew Russell, IT Manager, The Glennie School

The Glennie School’s IT department was initially looking for a replacement firewall with transparent proxy functionality, but when Exinda was recommended by eComputing, a local technology distributor, The Glennie School decided to trial an Exinda Network Orchestrator appliance and were impressed with the layer 7 application classification and the ability to easily block or control web traffic on an Active Directory, user, or group level. Matthew Russell, IT Manager at the Glennie School, selected a virtual Exinda appliance for its flexibility and ability to scale, knowing that the IT department would be adding more SaaS applications in the future and potentially upgrading their bandwidth capacity again to support the growing number of parents connecting to the network when visiting the school for sporting events and other activities. After an easy install process using the Exinda Configuration Wizard, The Glennie School was able to monitor all traffic crossing the network and take action to prioritize staff usage over students, restrict Facebook, Twitter and torrent sites, and guarantee set bandwidth levels to their critical learning and administrative applications.



The Results

“Implementation of fair use is very easy and we don’t have to put a lot of thought into it. We now have policies to prioritize staff over students and identify curriculumbased web traffic to ensure we get the most out of our 200 Mbps connection.”

— Matthew Russell, IT Manager, The Glennie School

Since implementing Exinda, The Glennie School can now identify who is accessing the network, monitor the applications and devices in use and set time of day policies to restrict social media activity during school hours, but allow the boarding community to use it in the evenings. With Exinda, the IT department now generates weekly reports that they share with the Head of IT and pastoral care leaders on application usage trends and individual student activity. The bandwidth that Exinda has helped The Glennie School save is now allocated to their on-premise Google Apps backup, and using a virtual appliance means that staff do not have to invest in incremental hardware updates as their education network continues to grow, resulting in overall IT cost savings for the school.

gfi.com/exinda