Illinois Central College Ensures Exceptional Experiences for Students, Faculty and Community Members

Illinois Central College

GFI Software™

About the Client

Founded in 1967, Illinois Central College (ICC) is one of the largest community college districts in Illinois, covering 2,322 square miles and serving 10 counties in Central Illinois. ICC is committed to providing high quality, affordable education and is invested in the future of the local communities it serves.

With more than 2,200 classes offered each semester, ICC is dedicated to championing academic excellence and helping its students realize success through the use of technology in the classroom. To aid in the school's mission, ICC needs consistent access to in-class video content, instructional course materials and online testing applications, which require significant bandwidth to perform as expected. After struggling to balance the College's Internet access needs during peak hours and deliver reliable user experiences, ICC sought out Exinda for a solution to help better manage network resources on campus.

✓ Improved user experience	✓ Controlled P2P sharing
✓ Maximized available bandwith	✓ Easily manage traffic

The Challenge

Illinois Central College's Technology Services department is tasked with supporting the educational and administrative activities of approximately 1,000 faculty and staff, along with thousands of students across its four campus locations. Additionally, the students living in ICC's Campus Housing depend upon ubiquitous Internet access for a connected learning and social experience. ICC depends upon critical cloud-based applications like Blackboard, the school's electronic library resources, online testing platforms and many other types of online curriculum content for daily use. Adding more multimedia content into the classroom for instructional purposes was vital to the College, however this was not possible due to bandwidth constraints. ICC's Technology Services department's goal was to find a solution that could help them get the most out of their existing Internet connection by prioritizing available bandwidth to essential cloud applications and classroom content to ensure users always have an excellent experience.

The Solution

> *"We were looking for a solution that was reliable, cost effective, and from a company that is willing to continuously invest in advancing the development and features of their product."*

— Dan Robinson, Infrastructure Analyst, Illinois Central College

Prior to implementing Exinda, the College did not have any traffic management tools in place so ICC's Technology Services department underwent a thorough search to find the right solution for their school, including evaluating Cymphonix's NetworkComposer and Blue Coat's PacketShaper. Dan Robinson, Infrastructure Analyst at ICC, led the evaluations and quickly ruled out Cymphonix after the appliance failed and PacketShaper after realizing it was not within budget. Next, ICC evaluated Exinda with a Systems Engineer, and the solution proved to be the best for the College's needs with its real time monitoring and ability to easily create optimization policies for specific applications, websites and user groups. After a successful evaluation, ICC installed an Exinda 7700 series solution to manage the traffic across all campus locations and created policies to protect their priority applications, classrooms, labs and online testing.

The Results

> *"With Exinda, I can come into work and not have to think about it, which says a lot about the quality and reliability of the solution. Ultimately what counts is the end user's perception concerning their online experience. In our world, if you hear nothing, things are going well and it's been a lot quieter since we started using Exinda."*

— Dan Robinson, Infrastructure Analyst, Illinois Central College

Since initial deployment, Illinois Central College has provisioned a second Exinda appliance for complete coverage across the campus network. Now with two Exinda solutions in place, ICC has a unified view of all Internet traffic and is able to strategically prioritize network resources in order to get the most out of their current Internet connection. Using Exinda's real time monitoring and alerting, ICC can now see when non-essential applications are using too much bandwidth like P2P and create policies to throttle this traffic. Exinda's proactive alerting enables Technology Services to troubleshoot problems faster when they do arise and provide immediate feedback to faculty and staff. With Exinda, ICC's Technology Services department has maximized their bandwidth investment by controlling campuswide Internet consumption and can always ensure exceptional application quality of experience for its students, faculty and community members.

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