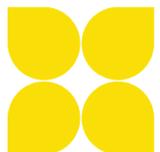




Sophos MTR a “reassuring approach to threat protection” for **Inspire Education Group**

Inspire Education Group is a provider of further and higher education with two main campuses in Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire. The Group also delivers specialist commercial training for employers locally, regionally and nationally.

CUSTOMER-AT-A-GLANCE



Stamford
College

Inspire Education Group

Industry
Education

Sophos Customer

Since 2009

Number of Users

4,000 devices

150 servers

13,000 users

Sophos Solutions

Sophos Central

Intercept X Server

Sophos XG Firewalls

Sophos Managed Threat

Response (MTR)

'Sophos never dictated to us – they just guided us through the process, step by step giving us a good understanding of each step. We were always listened to.'

Stuart Axford, Group IT Infrastructure Manager, Inspire Education Group



Inspire Education Group extended its IT security to include Sophos Managed Threat Response (MTR) in 2021. Ransomware threats were high on the Group's radar following a recent attack on a nearby college so a solution was needed fast. Read on to find out why the Group chose MTR and how the story unfolded.

Business challenges

Stuart Axford, Group IT Infrastructure Manager at Inspire Education Group admits he's a big Sophos fan. And when Stuart started working at the Group in 2016 he was pleased to see that Sophos was already in place in Stamford College. A competing solution was being used at Peterborough. Ten months ago when the Group was formed, Stamford moved from on-premise Sophos Endpoint

Protection to cloud-based Sophos Central alongside XG Firewalls and Intercept X for Server, which Stuart says he was very happy with because "it just got on with the job of protecting the Group in the background".

Yet as time passed and attacks on colleges became more prevalent, paired with a devastating ransomware attack on a nearby college, Stuart decided it was time to fortify the Group's resilience against ransomware threats. He had become increasingly nervous about the shifting security landscape in the education sector and decided action was needed. He turned to Sophos partner Phoenix for advice, who suggested a number of options – and Sophos MTR was one of them. Stuart assessed the options Phoenix had put forward but Sophos MTR was the clear winner in terms of functionality and pricing over a three year period.

The technical solution

When the time came to move both colleges in the Group to MTR, disaster struck. At the Peterborough site, when the team removed the incumbent solution, ransomware attackers managed to compromise the college before MTR was installed. The attackers failed to access Stamford systems because MTR was already in place there, as well as the other Sophos solutions the college had installed. Nothing was lost or damaged at Stamford yet in Peterborough, 80 servers were compromised. Thankfully, recent backups meant that the college did not lose everything.

Stuart reached out to Sophos to help the college and get the team back on their feet. "They were very calming during our crisis," says Stuart. They reassured us and left us with no questions unanswered. The process was amazing." Sophos



‘Sophos MTR and the Sophos team act as our goalkeepers, sitting behind us with their skill sets and giving us reassurance that they have our back.’

Stuart Axford, Group IT Infrastructure Manager, Inspire Education Group

rolled MTR out much faster than first anticipated in order to prevent any further attacks on the Group. “We were reassured that someone had our back,” says Stuart.

Sophos MTR provides 24/7 threat hunting, detection, and response capabilities delivered by an expert team as a fully-managed service. With Sophos MTR, Stuart and his team are now armed with a 24/7 team of threat hunters and response experts who will:

- Proactively seek out and validate potential threats and incidents
- Use all available information to determine the scope and severity of threats
- Apply the appropriate business context for valid threats

- Initiate actions to remotely disrupt, contain, and neutralize threats
- Provide actionable advice for addressing the root cause of recurring incidents

Business benefits

Onboarding MTR was very easy according to Stuart, and an assessment with a checklist was provided by Sophos, with recommendations for future changes to the security stack. Stuart and the team now get automated alerts if there’s ever a problem so they are always aware of any issues or threats which are then swiftly dealt with by the Sophos team. Stuart’s team can be as involved as they wish and can work closely with Sophos to understand and neutralize threats, dealing with any attacks together while learning more about the threat landscape. A summary of the benefits to the Group include:

- A methodical, reassuring, professional and direct approach to threat protection
- Phase by phase guidance with clear understanding of each phase
- Upskilling staff and working closely with Sophos rather than just implementing the product
- The peace of mind, ease of use, cost and time savings that customers expect from Sophos
- Native language speakers and no language barriers if the team call for support
- A convenient 24/7 service that works alongside the Group’s IT team
- Budget met with a three year deal

Stuart is delighted with Sophos MTR and feels that his requirements for increased security, including ransomware protection across the Group, have been met by this product and the Sophos team that sits behind it. He is also very happy with the service he receives, from the regular conversations he has with his Account Manager as well as the Sales Engineers that installed the product. Stuart is looking forward to a continued relationship with Sophos in the future and is happy to talk to other colleges about his positive experiences with Sophos MTR.

'We got pricing and product information from other companies offering a similar MTR service but they just didn't feel right, although the functionality was similar. We are now very grateful that we chose Sophos for time and cost savings, ease of use, and peace of mind.'

Stuart Axford, Group IT Infrastructure Manager, Inspire Education Group

To find out more about Sophos solutions, call [0]8447 671131 or email sales@sophos.com