

School Division Realizes Benefits of Managed Security Service

AxiaSecure™ reduces costs and increases productivity



Father Gorman Community School

When Armand Brockhoff, Network Systems Analyst for the Lloydminster Catholic School Division, decided a Virtual Private Network (VPN) solution was required in order to allow their administrators access to the network servers during a recent website redesign, he didn't realize it would lead to a complete overhaul of their network security.

Situated on the border between Saskatchewan and Alberta, the Lloydminster Catholic School Division supports five schools ranging from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The Division offers a full range of curricular and extra-curricular programs including French Immersion, Practical and Applied Arts, Career Exploration, Athletics, Fine Arts and Music Ministry.

The Lloydminster School Division realized the importance of students having access to the internet, email and other electronic communication methods, however ensuring adequate security levels were in place was both challenging and time consuming. Their primary concerns were to reduce spam and improve content filtering.

At times, Armand and his team could easily spend a full day looking through logs, white listing email addresses and determining why certain websites were being blocked when they shouldn't be, or not being blocked when they should be.

While they were doing that, other responsibilities were being neglected.

As the Division began evaluating system requirements for their website redesign project, they contacted Axia to inquire about a VPN solution that would suit their needs, and discovered that not only could AxiaSecure™ provide them with the necessary VPNs, it could also look after all their network security requirements.

Axia's Senior Security Specialist said, "When we started talking to them about the security features tied to the VPN, they decided to replace their existing email and web filter appliances. They had several different appliances that were performing different functions and working independently of each

other. This creates an environment that is more difficult to manage and monitor."

After a couple conference calls between the school

division and Axia's security team to discuss network layout, servers, etc., a trip was made to Lloydminster to install and configure the service.

Armand was very pleased with how smoothly the installation went. "I was a little nervous when we first started this", he said, and continued, "I was afraid it was going to be overwhelming. When [Axia] came in it was so quick, they asked me a few things about IP addresses, etc. and we were off to the races."

"The response time has been excellent, the guys in the [Security Operations Center] are so easy going, it's been awesome."

The service was installed at the head office, and filters traffic between each school and the head office. All traffic filters back through SuperNet to the head office, and then out to the internet. Having security integrated with their active directory and LDAP servers also allows the school division to do user level authentication and monitoring. This means that rather than access being granted (or not granted) to a particular computer, access is managed at the individual user level. Any student or teacher can log into any computer and have their full access rights available to them at that station.

Armand and his team are already enjoying the benefits of having Axia's team of experts manage their network security. Their monthly costs have been reduced, as the cost for AxiaSecure is less than the cost to maintain their former web and email filtering support contracts. SPAM has been reduced significantly, and teachers are no longer voicing concerns about students accessing inappropriate sites. But the biggest benefit, according to Armand, is the amount of time he has regained by turning the daily security management functions over to Axia.

Armand summed up his experience, "The big thing I would stress is that it's super easy to implement. I hardly had to do anything at all, just make a couple phone calls and watch Axia do their thing. The response time has been excellent, the guys in the [Security Operations Center] are so easy going, it's been awesome."



St. Mary's School

Axia is the manager and operator of the Alberta SuperNet.