Case Study

FERRANTI
computer systems

Xaveriuscollege in Borgerhout boosts performance and simplifies management with new Cisco Meraki network, installed by Ferranti Computer Systems

At a glance

CUSTOMER
- Xaveriuscollege in Borgerhout
- 1400 students
- 140 staff
- Primary and secondary education

KEY CHALLENGES
- Create new network with the right performance to support new developments, including Bring Your Own Device
- Simplify IT management, which will free uptime for ICT department to support users
- Deploy a network that aligns with the school's strategy to use various cloud solutions, including Microsoft 365

BENEFITS
- Reliable and fast network with Meraki switches and access points
- Easy web-based management and monitoring of all network components
- Fast resolution of problems through 'always, anywhere' management in the cloud

XAVERIUSCOLLEGE BORGERHOUT

Xaveriuscollege in Borgerhout, Antwerp (Belgium) provides primary and secondary education to some 1400 students. The school employs around 140 teachers and other staff. Both students and staff are increasingly dependent on technology for efficient school operations and for curricular activities.

In 2006, the school deployed its first wireless local area network (WLAN) with basic functionalities. Since, the demand for reliable wireless access has risen dramatically, as more and more students and staff started using mobile devices.

"In 2014, it became obvious that we needed to upgrade our existing network. It was not only end-of-life technically, but also prevented us from profiting fully from new developments, including Bring Your Own Device and cloud computing," says Marc Hoefkens, ICT Coordinator at Xaveriuscollege.

"Both trends play an important role in our school. Many students and staff bring their laptops or smartphones. Also, we have many guests who ask for internet access when visiting the school. Moreover, we are deploying more and more cloud solutions, including Microsoft 365, the accounting learning and evaluation platform and our room reservation system. This type of solutions obviously requires reliable and fast internet access."

"We now have a future-proof network in place"

*Marc Hoefkens,
ICT coordinator at
Xaveriuscollege*

CISCO Meraki

Survey

Hoefkens turned to Ferranti Computer Systems for help. Ferranti was also the supplier of the existing network and therefore was acquainted with the specific challenges at the school. The college is for example located in a historical building which requires special attention when designing a new network. Ferranti proposed to do a survey to determine the best approach for the new network. The survey was based on two major requirements. Hoefkens: "We wanted to boost the performance for users and simplify the management of the new network. Ferranti proposed to deploy Cisco Meraki switches and access points that can be managed in the cloud. We support this choice as we have been using Cisco technology for a long time without any problem."

Deployment

Ferranti and its sub-contractor FlexIP used the autumn break of 2014 to do most of the work. In addition to a number of Meraki switches for connecting various locations, 65 access points were installed throughout the school buildings. In 2015, an additional new Meraki firewall will be installed to keep out unwanted visitors and to improve bandwidth use by prioritizing traffic.

Benefits

According to Hoefkens, the school is now well-prepared for the future. "We now have a network in place that is much more flexible, easy to manage and monitor and much more powerful. We can for example very easily create VLANS for guest speakers, interns, specialized external staff and parents or when we have a special event where internet access is important. Another major benefit is management. The Meraki devices can be fully managed via the internet through a single pane of glass, which aligns with Xaverius' strategy to use cloud technology where it is suitable. "By using the Meraki app, I can troubleshoot and fix problems anytime, anywhere", says Hoefkens. "I can also monitor the actual use of any access point. This new network clearly supports us in offering reliable network access to students, staff and guests and providing optimum support. We are definitely fully prepared for the BYOD era."

Cooperation

Hoefkens looks back on fruitful cooperation with Ferranti Computer Systems and FlexIP. "Obviously, the right planning was required as we cannot close the school just like that. We used the autumn break and weekends to finalize the project. We are now looking at possibilities to outsource the maintenance of components to Ferranti as well."