



Hampden Academy

Hampden Academy of Maine Chooses Aerohive's Enterprise WLAN to Manage Influx of Apple Devices

Challenges

- To meet the demands of BYOD and computer-based testing, the Maine School Administrative District 22 needed a robust, scalable, easily configured wireless network in Hampden Academy — its new high school.
- The district wanted a solution that was easy to configure and maintain, all while coming in at a good price point.
- The high school is an all-Apple shop and they needed an efficient way to use Air Play and Air Print in classrooms.

Results

- Even with all the classes up and running on the Aerohive wireless networks, they see no latency issues — everything is fast and responsive.
- Aerohive's Bonjour Gateway has meant much-improved classroom streaming and overall performance.
- Aerohive has so impressed the district that it will replace the wireless networks in its elementary school and superintendent's office in the very near future.

About Hampden Academy

The Hampden Academy is part of the Maine School Administrative District 22, a public school district with 2,147 students located in six physical schools (one high school, two middle schools, three elementary), all coming from three towns. The district just opened a new high school in August 2012.

The Challenge

Like all school districts implementing a major wireless-device program, an enterprise-class network is a must.

"Knowing that in our new high school, we were going to implement a student 1:1 Apple iPad rollout — in addition to the 100-plus wireless laptops we already had — we needed a robust, scalable, easily configured wireless network," said Jeff Woodside of Hampden Academy.

"We were looking for a cloud-based solution that was easy to configure and maintain, all while coming in at a good price point," Woodside added.

The Solution

At Hampden Academy, students, staff and visitors all reap the benefits of mobility and a comprehensive wireless network. The academy has about 130 staff members and 720 students. All staff have not only a 1:1 laptop assigned to them, but also an iPad assigned to them. All students have an iPad assigned to them, as well as BYOD peripherals (laptops, smart phones).

"It is not uncommon to have more than 1,000-plus wireless devices online at any time, either through school-provided equipment or personally owned devices utilizing the Aerohive guest portal," Woodside said.

The academy's technology backbone is robust. The high school network is comprised of Category 6 cabling and 8 Brocade 10/100/1000 POE switches. The school has a 2GB fiber backbone with full switch fault isolation in the case of switch failure. The connection from the LAN to the Internet is 200 Mbps.

Hampden uses a mix of Aerohive Access Points: Indoors, Aerohive AP330s are deployed, and outdoors AP170s.

"Even with all the classes up and running on the Aerohive wireless networks, we see no latency issues. Everything is fast and responsive."

—Jeff Woodside

Technology Coordinator, Hampden Academy

"In addition to our internal APs, we have outdoor APs providing network access across the high schools campus," Woodside said. "Our SSID key is encrypted via WPA2, and our guest portal has a user agreement via a web page that pops up whenever someone new connects to it. Once they accept the terms and conditions, they are instantly allowed to use the Internet."

Considering the Alternatives

The school district graduated to a new Aerohive deployment at the just-opened high school, as it replaced an existing Cisco wireless network at the old facility.

Woodside said they'd done research on Cisco, HP, Meraki and Brocade. "We had started using Aerohive AP330s and AP170s in our old high school in December 2011 to try them out before installing them in our new high school in the summer of 2012," he added.

Woodside got some important advice during the research phase. "We were approached by Mike Tullis from GovConnection, as he knew of our desire to look at other vendors for our wireless implementation," Woodside said. "He set up the introduction to Aerohive at a school already using Aerohive so we could see firsthand the implementation, as well as talk to the folks managing/using it."

The Hampden Academy is a 100 percent Apple school, using iMacs, Macbooks, and iPads. Because of that, Woodside particularly likes Aerohive's patent-pending Bonjour Gateway for Air Play and Air Print.

As to whether the academy is running any unique applications over Wi-Fi, Woodside said the following:

"All of our classrooms and conference areas (64-plus) have Interactive Ultra Wide short throw projectors with an Apple TV connected to it. Wireless is used from iPads and laptops to the projectors to stream the devices' screen, audio and video, as well as Web content. Basically, nothing we have thrown at the wireless has had an issue. Even with all the classes up and running and on the wireless networks, we see no latency issues. Everything is fast and responsive."

Results & Recommendations

The district's new, \$52 million high school is thrilled with Aerohive. "It has been working so well that we will be replacing the wireless networks in our elementary school and superintendent's office with Aerohive in the very near future," Woodside said.

As for command and control, the academy is using the cloud-based HiveManagerOnline. "It has been accessible 24x7, and it's a huge benefit when we are in another physical location and have a trouble-ticket opened and can immediately go check the configuration and status of the wireless network," Woodside said.

He sees a growing use of more Aerohive tools as he goes forward. "In the educational arena, things change rapidly. We are utilizing more and more online and cloud-based tools, tests and assessments," he said.

In summary, Woodside relayed an unusual story about the durability of Aerohive APs. "For what it's worth, we had one of the AP330s mounted below a water pipe that burst right above it. The AP died, but after we poured the water out and let it dry out a few days, we reconnected it and it worked. This device is still currently in use months later."



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