Wodonga Institute of TAFE

Aerohive Networks brings significant cost savings and high network performance to Wodonga Institute of TAFE

Challenges

- Need to upgrade existing Wi-Fi infrastructure across multi-campus TAFE to a reliable and centrally managed WLAN
- Complexities associated with moving to next generation learning techniques with existing unreliable wireless infrastructure
- Resolve critical issues with network reliability
- Faced with high licensing and hardware controller costs and needed to find a vendor who provided better value for money

Results

- Deployed 74 AP230s across sprawling campus
- Cost saving of about 70 per cent over previous Wi-Fi provider
- Blanket wireless coverage, with scope to layer applications and services in the future
- Increased productivity and efficiency for teaching staff and students
- Easy and fast deployment and management at remote campuses
- Simple set-up and ongoing cloud-based management of access points

About Wodonga Institute of TAFE

Founded in 1986, the Wodonga Institute of TAFE is a multi-disciplinary teaching organisation with over 500 staff and several thousand students. Located in the twin cities of Albury Wodonga on the border of Victoria and New South Wales, the educational facility teaches members of the Australian Defence Force (Army) and offers courses for a range of qualifications, including hospitality, nursing, childcare, truck driving and warehouse management.

Wodonga TAFE provides practical hands-on training and education from Certificate I to Advanced Diploma level across a range of industry areas. Its industry-simulated training facilities include specialist training centres such as the National Industrial Skills Training Centre and Motorsports Training Australia.

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>
> **—Gus Terry**
> Network Engineer, Information Communications Technology, Wodonga Institute of TAFE.

The TAFE institute was judged Australian Large Training Provider of the Year in 2008 due to its commitment to lead practice and excellence in the delivery of vocational education and training to diverse groups of learners from industry and the community.

Introduction

As a major institute of advanced learning, Wodonga Institute of TAFE relies heavily on its technology infrastructure to provide teaching and learning support to its 500 staff and many thousands of students. In the modern mobile world, wireless connectivity is a must.

The Institute's previous wireless network was expensive to acquire and support, and proved unreliable in service, leaving some buildings of Wodonga campus with no wireless connectivity at all. On top of the complexity of managing the Wi-Fi network, the ageing wireless access points and controllers were also a challenge, with inconsistency of coverage causing significant downtime.

The new Aerohive Wi-Fi network that has been implemented costs significantly less and is much more reliable than the system it replaced,

greatly improving productivity of staff and students. The network provides the basis for flexible, fluid learning for the Institute's thousands of students across its large multi-campus facility in the northern Victorian city of Wodonga, and at the Institute's remote campus in Tasmania.

Ageing Wi-Fi Network Proves Costly and Unreliable

To support its advanced learning curriculum, Wodonga TAFE implemented a BYOD (bring your own device) policy for teaching and non-teaching staff, and for students. BYOD enabled staff and students to use their own wireless-equipped mobile devices, greatly increasing access to course content and other information on the network, anywhere on the campus, beyond the parameters of the classroom.

But the influx of wireless devices placed great strains on the existing wireless infrastructure, which was implemented in 2010, making it difficult to support the policy in a cost-effective and efficient manner. Students and teaching staff were struggling to stay connected to the WiFi as it would drop out intermittently, causing significant disruptions to the flow of the lectures and learning.

Moreover, some buildings of the Wodonga campus were left without wireless access for a number of years, due to access point equipment failures. Students as well as teaching staff were greatly affected by this problem because it meant that some faculties could not benefit from the BYOD policy the institution had implemented. The quality of the lectures, teaching materials, course content delivery, learning abilities within those faculties were all on the decline due to the lack of wireless access.

For an educational institution that aspired to next-generation learning, these issues were simply unacceptable.

Wireless Network Renewal with Aerohive Networks

The IT team at Wodonga TAFE investigated several network providers to support the roll-out of a new and more robust wireless network across all campuses.

They soon found that a consistent problem with many of the systems under consideration was a distinct lack of documentation and other relevant information to support the installation, roll-out and ongoing service of the wireless access points. That was not the case with Aerohive Networks.

"Aerohive provided us with the technical assistance and took the time to answer all our questions around the deployment process, long-term operational demands and compatibility with new devices or applications" said Gus Terry, Network Engineer, Information Communications Technology at Wodonga TAFE.

After offering Wodonga TAFE an AP230 Wi-Fi access point to trial on site, Aerohive proactively worked with the Wodonga TAFE IT team to ensure the solution met all their requirements. After a successful Proof of Concept they introduced one of their resellers, Beachhead Group, to assist with the implementation and rollout.

"Being proactively offered a test unit to use in our own localised deployment along with the ongoing support was absolute gold to us,"

said Terry. Aerohive's superior cost-model, scalability and technical support, were major factors in being selected by Wodonga TAFE.

In November 2014, Wodonga TAFE adopted Aerohive, deploying 19 AP230s, which included Aerohive's management platform HiveManager, to meet the Institute's wireless access needs.

The initial implementation was easy, seamless and simple, with the IT staff at Wodonga TAFE able to complete the roll-out across all campuses within a couple of days. The lightweight and compact size of the AP230 made it easy for the IT team to affix them to any surface, including plaster or tiles, without further physical support. This greatly assisted the implementation process.

Aerohive Paves the Way for Next Generation Learning

Aerohive's network enables Wodonga TAFE to capitalise on the substantial statistical data generated by the Aerohive infrastructure to help create next-generation learning pathways for students. Engaging with students on their preferred methods of learning, which is usually on their own personal smart devices, has helped TAFE Wodonga increase teacher effectiveness by empowering teachers with the right tools and technology, and there has been a noticeable boost in the motivation levels of students.

Aerohive's HiveManager allows Terry and his team to have a central view of all network activity across all campuses, turning troubleshooting into child's play.

"We have so much more insight into what is happening on our network than we ever had in the past," Terry said. "The IT team at Wodonga TAFE has such unprecedented visibility across the network that we are able to pre-empt many issues and fix them before they arise. This is extremely valuable to us as it has significantly reduced the amount of time the team spends troubleshooting".

Most importantly, the Aerohive infrastructure has reduced the cost of the network by approximately 70 per cent, compared to the previous equipment. "The cost savings were phenomenal," said Terry. "With our previous network we were not happy with what we could do. Aerohive delivers everything we need and more and at a greatly reduced price".

Before the Aerohive deployment, access to the network system was available to only three people in the Wodonga TAFE IT team. Now ten IT staff can access and use the system simultaneously and remotely. This has positively impacted the efficiency and productivity of the entire IT team and significantly decreased the time spent resolving network issues.

Bright Future with Aerohive Networks

Wodonga TAFE has since purchased 55 additional Aerohive AP230s Wi-Fi access points. There is also potential for other Aerohive products such as switches to also be implemented, due to the simplicity and ease of management of the network.

"We are so happy with Aerohive that we are looking forward to completely replacing and turning-off our old Wi-Fi infrastructure for good," said Terry. "Overall, Aerohive is the wireless network of our dreams."

About Aerohive Networks

Aerohive (NYSE: HIVE) enables customers to simply and confidently connect to the information, applications, and insights they need to thrive. Aerohive's simple, scalable, and secure platform delivers mobility without limitations. For over 20,000 customers worldwide, every access point is a starting point.

Aerohive was founded in 2006 and is headquartered in Sunnyvale, CA. For more information, please visit www.aerohive.com, call us at 408-510-6100, follow us on Twitter @Aerohive, subscribe to our blog, join our community or become a fan on our Facebook

Contact us today to learn how your organization can benefit from Aerohive wireless LAN architecture.

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