

# TraceSecurity and St. Joseph's Academy: Providing a Safe Education in Technology

## CASE STUDY

With a mission "to educate young women as responsible and unifying members of the world community," St. Joseph's Academy serves approximately 800 students each year. The Baton Rouge, Louisiana institution is well known for providing individual laptops to each and every student – and allowing those students, grades 9 through 12, unrestricted access to the administration of their laptop.

St. Joseph's Director of Technology, Jane Metcalf, describes the program as "something that is educationally very powerful for the girls. While following legal and safety rules, we let them do whatever they want on their laptops. They might download games at first, but very quickly they learn that this is a business tool used in every class." They also learn that understanding how to use technology will continue to benefit them throughout their academic and professional lives.

The Academy began the laptop program in the late 1990's, purchasing equipment from several different vendors and managing security in-house. However, when Metcalf joined St. Joseph's in July 2004, she instituted a program to standardize laptop models and networking equipment. Formerly a systems and operations manager, Metcalf recognized the "huge need for network security" given the free reign the students have with their laptops.

John Richardson, St. Joseph's Infrastructure Architect, notes that "We always had virus protection and spyware, but as far as constantly monitoring firewalls and the configuration to secure the laptops, we didn't have the time, the manpower, or the expertise to do that. That's where TraceSecurity came in."

### Watching Over the Network

Introduced to TraceSecurity by an alumna and an acquaintance of the Sister who started the laptop program, St. Joseph's Academy signed a multi-year contract for the company's security management software and services. The decision was easy, says Metcalf, as "It was clear that this was more than just a business opportunity for TraceSecurity; they really took to heart the school's need to keep these girls safe."

It didn't take long for the school to realize the benefits of its relationship with TraceSecurity. Its flagship product, TraceSecurity Compliance Manager, gives St. Joseph's a real-time view of its network environment, providing actionable alerts and remediation recommendations.

Greg Hanner, St. Joseph's Network Administrator, explains that "TraceSecurity has a hardware device that they access remotely to scan our network. They run scans every quarter, and they don't just find vulnerabilities, they also give us recommendations on how to address them; the reports offer advice on how to approach each vulnerability, so they're very comprehensive."

"TraceSecurity was crucial in finding vulnerabilities in Linux components that would have gone unnoticed, because nobody on our staff is really a Linux expert as far as security of the boxes," he continues.

Metcalf adds that "One of our goals is to stay on the leading edge of technology. New technology very often opens new vulnerabilities and we are very leanly staffed, so we don't have the resources to keep track of these ourselves. We need somebody who is watching over things for us."



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Hanner agrees, remarking that “Rather than diagnosing the network and searching for these vulnerabilities ourselves, we can go straight to remedying the problem, so it frees up a lot of our staff time.”

“It allows us to get back to our main business, which is education,” interjects Richardson.

### Technology Expertise for Schools

As a showcase school for technology in Southeast Louisiana, St. Joseph's often hosts representatives from other schools. These visitors, says Metcalf, “often don't understand that technology is a profession, a business that requires expertise that traditional educators don't have. One of the things St. Joseph's did that made a big difference was that we looked for someone with business experience, who knew vulnerabilities, who knew network security, who knew what to do to make it run smoothly.”

“Schools,” she continues, “are not in the business of network security, so sometimes their network is inadvertently wide open. Moving forward, schools would do well to look beyond the educational community for people who do this as a business – people like TraceSecurity.”

Metcalf and Richardson also travel to other schools around the country to tout their laptop program and, notes Richardson, “Ultimately, we are asked, ‘How secure is it? Are my grades secure? Can I email confidentially to my guidance counselor?’”

“Now I can say yes because we have TraceSecurity behind us.”

“What TraceSecurity brings,” adds Hanner, “is the equivalent – if not more – of a full-time security expert on hand for a fraction of the salary of a highly skilled employee.”

“And that brings peace of mind,” remarks Richardson.

### The Best of Both Worlds

Discussing St. Joseph's return on investment in TraceSecurity, Metcalf points out that “Return on investment is very different in schools than in businesses. In education, teacher salary makes up a significant percentage of operating expenses, so with any technology, you aren't going to get a huge dollar advantage like you might at a business.”

“But the real return on investment,” she explains, “is our ability to say to the parents of our students: ‘We keep your daughter as safe as possible – *and* we allow your daughter to learn and touch technology as fully as possible, so that when she goes to college, her skill set is outstanding.’”

Typically, Metcalf states, “If you let people touch everything, you've got no security; but if you have lots of security, you lose functionality. The return on investment with TraceSecurity is that we can have our cake and eat it too.”

