



How Brisbane Catholic Education Supercharged Its Security Stack

INDUSTRY

Education

HEADQUARTERS

Brisbane, Australia

COMPANY SIZE

77,000 students;
12,000 staff

OVERVIEW

Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) is a learning community comprised of the Catholic schools and staff of the Brisbane Catholic Education Office. With over 140 schools, BCE provides quality teaching and learning outcomes for 77,000 prep to year 12 students. To fulfill its mission to teach, challenge and transform, BCE inspires a love of learning and strives to realize the potential of its students, staff and communities.

OUR SOLUTION



CHALLENGE

BCE's educational and administrative workflows are powered by a large, distributed hybrid infrastructure. In fact, BCE has the largest non-governmental Microsoft Office 365 tenancy in the southern hemisphere.



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Tom Nitzschner, Senior ICT Officer, Brisbane Catholic Education



The community's physical data center hosts all critical school functions supporting its 77,000 students and 12,000 staff members, such as library systems, student support, grading, payroll and more. For Tom Nitzschner, Senior ICT Officer for BCE, and his team, securing student data and personal information is a top priority, as is safeguarding the network, communication links and operational data.

As a long-time Check Point customer, BCE had already deployed clustered Check Point Quantum Security Gateways to secure data center systems and operations. However, after significant data breaches at two large Australian companies, BCE wanted even deeper visibility into its data, traffic and file attachments to avoid a similar result. "We wanted to see everything coming through the data center," said Nitzschner. "With Quantum Security Gateways, we knew we had plenty of capacity, so we decided to activate all of the protections available to further limit risk."

SOLUTION

A Check Point Quantum Security Gateway cluster is the security cornerstone of the data center, offering a host of threat-prevention capabilities. Quantum's remote access VPN features, which enabled BCE to support remote workers during the pandemic, continue to support a hybrid work environment with minimal maintenance. Newly activated Quantum Intrusion Prevention System (IPS) blade features further optimize BCE's defenses against exploits and protocol misuse. In addition, the team expanded its rule set to align more closely with BCE's data center environment. For an added layer of protection against malicious attachments, Nitzschner's team leverages SandBlast zero-day protection to inspect all downloads and attachments arriving at the gateways and extract malicious content before delivery.

To help BCE get the most out of their deployment, Check Point provides a dedicated Technical Account Manager (TAM). Nitzschner relies on his TAM to fine-tune threat prevention capabilities, roll out new features and assist on other ad hoc projects. Nitzschner updates the gateways and security policies between school terms, and the TAM works onsite with his team during the first day of a new term to ensure everything works as expected. "Check Point is always standing beside us when we need them," said Nitzschner. "With Check Point, we've done well."

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OUTCOME

Now that they have activated the full range of Quantum’s automated features, Nitzschner and his team can keep up with the latest vulnerabilities with significantly less manual effort. “We don’t have to chase the threat landscape anymore trying to figure out how to fight it,” said Nitzschner. “Check Point automatically updates the gateways, so we have peace of mind. When Log4j hit, we were protected. Now we just monitor to make sure things are running as they should.”

Filtering web traffic also became much more manageable. Previously, BCE relied on a third-party server with 16 blades devoted exclusively to inspecting web traffic — but it offered limited visibility. For example, the team could only see that a server request went out. With Quantum’s URL Filtering, the team can see both the destination domain and actual traffic. “We can see exactly what’s happening,” said Nitzschner. “If we see a server going somewhere we didn’t expect, we can quickly determine if it should be allowed or not and take action. And now we do it with a single solution.”

Of the many benefits Nitzschner has seen since upgrading his Check Point stack, reliability is chief among them. “The single most important benefit we receive is reliability,” he said. “We’ve never had a blue screen or other problems. The Quantum Security Gateways just run, and run and run.” By securing BCE’s data center with a unified platform, Nitzschner can scale Check Point’s threat prevention capabilities to manage the learning community’s growing digital infrastructure without adding staff or hardware. “By turning on Quantum’s full capabilities, we’re getting more protection and deeper visibility out of the investment we already made,” he said.

ABOUT CHECK POINT

Check Point Software Technologies Ltd. (www.checkpoint.com) is a leading AI-powered, cloud-delivered cyber security platform provider protecting over 100,000 organizations worldwide. Check Point leverages the power of AI everywhere to enhance cyber security efficiency and accuracy through its Infinity Platform, with industry-leading catch rates enabling proactive threat anticipation and smarter, faster response times. The comprehensive platform includes cloud-delivered technologies consisting of Check Point Harmony to secure the workspace, Check Point CloudGuard to secure the cloud, Check Point Quantum to secure the network, and Check Point Infinity Core Services for collaborative security operations and services.

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