Industry Brief

mimecast

Industry Brief for Public Sector: Education

Mimecast is the cloud platform that enables educational institutions to secure student records and valuable IP against the evolving cyberthreat landscape.

Whether it's a K-12 school, college or university, educational institutions place high value on academic excellence, student education, driving innovative research and protecting the welfare of their students, faculty and staff.

Remote learning has grown tremendously—out of necessity given the Covid-19 pandemic—forcing educational institutions to adopt better teaching, learning and online services. Many K-12 schools are implementing one-to-one device programs in which tablets or laptops are purchased and provided to students to enhance their learning experience. In higher ed, students bring their own devices and leverage the open, accessible nature of the campus network. In both of these dynamics, schools struggle to strike a balance between securing their environments while providing a transparent, accessible learning atmosphere.

Why Mimecast:

- More than 660 educational institutions trust Mimecast for cyber resilience
- Safeguard data and protect students, faculty and staff from targeted cyberthreats
- Dramatically reduce the risk of sophisticated attacks including phishing, ransomware, weaponized attachments and malicious URLs
- Reduce the burden on strained IT staff: a single dashboard for email security, web security, archiving and continuity streamlines configuration, reporting and troubleshooting
- Keep services running and quickly restore data when attacks to get through
- Align budgetary constraints with an affordable, predictable cost of ownership
- Empower staff with security awareness knowledge, making them an asset in protecting against cyberattacks
- Rich APIs to integrate to existing SIEMs, monitoring and reporting systems
- On the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) approved list for Cybersecurity Awareness Training

Educational institutions struggle with tight budgets and limited IT resources, making it difficult to attract and retain experienced IT professionals. Additionally, security concerns are often not the highest priority spend. Decision makers tend to view IT investments as a high cost item yielding no significant ROI. They grapple with justifying the cost of security solutions, asking themselves how better security can lead to improved student outcomes.

However, there is a direct connection. Insufficient security investments have made these institutions clear targets for ransomware, phishing attacks, impersonation attacks and other sophisticated cyberthreats. Hackers are stealing sensitive data including personally identifiable information (PII), student health records, personnel records and payroll information and using this data to commit identity theft, payroll theft or even file false tax returns for significant (and hard to resolve) monetary gain.

And at universities, proprietary research data, especially that focused on new technology and defense, is extremely valuable to nation-state hacker groups and state-sponsored hacking campaigns looking to steal and leverage cutting edge IP.

Sometimes the security threats even originate within the walls of the school. Desperate students try to hack into school systems to modify school records including grades, attendance records, or financial account balances. Seniors in high school may hack into SAT or ACT systems to alter scores and undermine the college admissions process.

The minds of teens and pre-teens can be reckless; once they decide to do something, they can be very determined to achieve their desired results without regard to the consequences of their actions.

The blend of tight budgets and limited resources coupled with risky behaviors by employees and students means IT teams must implement tools to navigate these challenges. Ultimately, IT teams need affordable, easy to manage solutions that protect sensitive data and deliver cyber resilience.

Challenges Facing Educational Institutions

Key Target for Cybercriminals, Nation-States and Hacktivists

Hackers are stealing sensitive student, faculty and staff data to commit identity and payroll theft, file false tax returns and sell data on the black market for significant monetary gains. A fresh crop of new students (freshman, graduate students) every year provide a regular stream of valuable PII to go after. Stolen research and IP can be used by competing nations and severely compromise national safety. These attackers rely heavily on email and the web to penetrate their victims and to spread their attacks.

Mimecast: Provides comprehensive protection against email-borne cyberthreats including ransomware, phishing, impersonation attacks, malicious URLs and weaponized attachments. Integrated web security services boost defenses by preventing infiltration and spread of attacks. Sync & Recover enables point-in-time archive retrieval of mailboxes, calendars and contacts—an especially effective way of recovering from a ransomware attack.

Limited Budgets and IT Resources

Public schools are notorious for being squeezed thin, as budgets can vary from year to year and from one district to another. Spending usually focuses on tangible items that will enhance student learning, while cybersecurity investments tend to take a backseat. Lean IT teams struggle to keep up with the demand of security their network and connected devices require.

Mimecast: True cloud architecture reduces both operating and capital expenses, while dramatically improving performance and preserving the institution's ability to manage and monitor its email and web security posture. A single dashboard streamlines configuration, reporting and troubleshooting.

Legacy Infrastructure

Educational institutions tend to have aging, outdated technology and infrastructure in place with major security gaps caused by dated systems and limited resources to maintain software and hardware updates. In many cases, a hacker only needs to find one vulnerability to take down the entire network.

Mimecast: 100% cloud-based security solution ensures systems always have the latest protections in place, simplifies email and web security management and reduces both costs and the burden on IT staff.

Combating Human Error in a Highly Connected Environment

Human error is a leading cause of security breaches and can cost educational institutions financial losses (ransoms, alumni donations, tax fraud), stolen research, emotional stress (identity theft, compromised learning) and reputational damage (loss of confidence by parents/students, difficulty attracting top faculty/staff, decline in student enrollment). One wrong click and the entire institution's network can be compromised. Educating faculty and staff enables them to be aware of the evolving threat landscape and make smart decisions that help protect the institution.

Mimecast: Security Awareness Training helps educational institutions protect their employees, intellectual property, sensitive student/staff data and reputation through a comprehensive, cloud-based security awareness training and cyber risk management platform.

Web Security

Despite lifelong exposure to the web, students often lack understanding of the severity of online risks, leading them to be "click-happy." Additionally, today's students are much more tech savvy and often find ways around restrictions and controls (web content filtering, security protocols, etc.) put in place on a device to get to the content they want to see. These security workarounds can open the doors for a malicious actor to strike. Clicking on a malicious link or visiting a bad site could unknowingly infect their device and, by extension, their school's network, resulting in a huge security nightmare for the institution.

Mimecast: Mimecast integrated Web Security Services block access to malicious websites and boost defenses by preventing the infiltration and spread of attacks.

Mimecast (NASDAQ: MIME)

Mimecast (NASDAQ: MIME) was born in 2003 with a focus on delivering relentless protection. Each day, we take on cyber disruption for our tens of thousands of customers around the globe; always putting them first, and never giving up on tackling their biggest security challenges together. We are the company that built an intentional and scalable design ideology that solves the number one cyberattack vector—email. We continuously invest to thoughtfully integrate brand protection, security awareness training, web security, compliance and other essential capabilities. Mimecast is here to help protect large and small organizations from malicious activity, human error and technology failure; and to lead the movement toward building a more resilient world. Learn more about us at **www.mimecast.com**.