

**FOUNDRY**  
NETWORKS

## CASE STUDY: WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

### Foundry Networks and Impulse Point Deliver NAC Solution to Provide Endpoint Security Policy Management



#### SUMMARY

West Chester University, a member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, is a public, regional, comprehensive institution committed to offering high-quality undergraduate education, select post-baccalaureate and graduate programs, and a variety of educational and cultural resources. Founded in 1871, and accommodating approximately 9,400 undergraduate students and 2,000 graduate students, West Chester University is the second largest of the 14 institutions of higher learning that compose the State System of Higher Education of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

When the university needed to upgrade its infrastructure to improve network reliability and security to support new applications such as voice over IP (VoIP), West Chester turned to Foundry Networks and their NAC Partner, Impulse Point. West Chester discovered that industry leading technology and superior responsive service and support can truly go hand in hand.

#### OBJECTIVE

The University's aging infrastructure was failing, creating service interruptions in an environment that relies on the network for everything from managing course schedules to supporting distance learning initiatives.

"First and foremost we needed a higher level of network reliability and security" says Steve Laverty, Director of Communication Infrastructure Services. "But the new infrastructure also had to provide a level of flexibility that allowed us to leverage our existing network investments while enabling future applications. And we wanted to work with technology partners capable of delivering a high level of service and support."

#### CHALLENGE

Because the school was taking a phased approach to upgrading the campus network, the new solution had to coexist with the university's current equipment for some time, requiring a solution that could handle varying gigabit rates from 10 gigabit to 100 gigabit on the same switch. In addition, the school wanted enhanced capabilities, such as Power over Ethernet (PoE) for VoIP services, gigabit connectivity to the desktop, and the ability to enforce endpoint security policies using Network Access Control (NAC) technology.

The University made service and support a key decision metric in their evaluation process due to poor experiences they endured with other network and security vendors.

"In the past we experienced a declining level of service after the sale," explains Richard Chan, Network Manager. "This time around it was vital that we work with business partners that are committed to providing a consistent level of support, from helping to determine the right solution up front to providing timely and reliable technical support after the equipment is deployed."

For a team of only two tasked with managing the entire campus network, the new network infrastructure had to be easy to manage and backed by organizations committed to its on-going success.

"Support for our growing network is paramount," agrees Laverty. "We wanted to work with an organization that not only had the ability to bring us innovative, leading technology that would support our increasing application requirements, but one that also valued an on-going relationship with the university."

But the challenges went beyond the infrastructure right into the residence halls, where students were accessing the network. The university has no control over user devices in the residence halls but the school still wanted to ensure that student devices met certain criteria before being connected to the network, for example making sure each computer is running the latest anti-virus definitions. The school needed an easy to manage Network Access

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#### INDUSTRY

Education

#### COMPANY DESCRIPTION

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#### OBJECTIVE

- Improve network reliability and security today
- Lay the foundation for future services
- A high level of service and support from network partner

#### SOLUTION

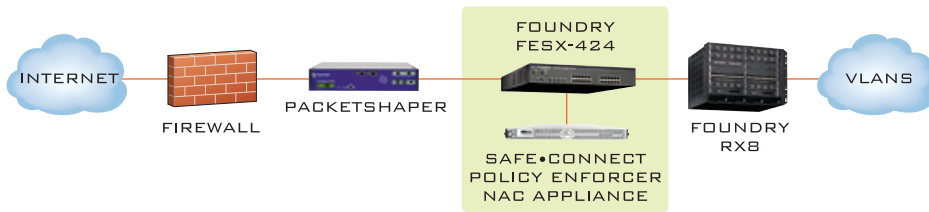
- Deploy FastIron Edge Switches and FastIron GS PoE switches
- Improve and simplify network management with Foundry's IronView Network Manager
- Deliver enterprise-wide Network Access Control with Safe•Connect™ from Impulse Point

#### RESULTS

- A more secure and protected university network
- A framework to implement and manage endpoint security policies
- Partners capable of delivering a high level of service and support as network requirements evolve

Control (NAC) solution that provides knowledge about who is accessing the network, and authorizes appropriate devices, while ensuring that devices adhere to endpoint security policies—all without driving additional resource requirements and costs.

“Security for our growing enterprise network is also paramount,” continues Laverty. “We have a responsibility to keep our students and staff safe, and to provide them with an enhanced user experience. We needed to find a new NAC provider that understood the unique requirements of higher education and had the ability to scale to support our expanding network environment.”



## SOLUTION

West Chester University already had experience with Foundry, choosing the BigIron RX for its core router in the past. So when it came time to upgrade the rest of the network the university looked to Foundry once again, but not before evaluating competitive offerings and determining that Foundry delivered exactly what it was looking for.

“We selected FastIron Edge and GS PoE switches for the network, and chose Safe•Connect NAC,” notes Laverty. “From the service we continue to receive to the reliability of the network and our ability to add new services, Foundry and Impulse Point have both exceeded our expectations.”

Impulse Point, a Foundry Networks Alliance Partner, replaced an existing NAC vendor to satisfy West Chester’s vision of delivering an enterprise-wide Network Access Control (NAC) solution. The combination of the FastIron Edge Switch (FES) series and Safe•Connect NAC provides the flexibility and reliability West Chester was seeking while simplifying network management complexity and reducing on-going support costs. Safe•Connect is delivered as an operationally managed service, further reducing the management burden for the two person network team. The health of the system is monitored from the Impulse Support Center on a 24/7 basis and Impulse Point is responsible for problem determination/resolution, and ongoing feature enhancements.

Impulse Point’s Safe•Connect™ solution functions as a true “out of line” network device and provides continuous real time (pre- and post-admission) policy enforcement across the network. In addition to leveraging Foundry’s IronShield Security Architecture to deliver the industry’s most scalable NAC enterprise solution, Safe•Connect’s OpenNAC architecture utilizes Foundry sFlow, Policy Based Routing, and 802.1x capabilities in conjunction with Impulse Point’s I-LAN host-based Layer 2 quarantine technology to offer the industry’s broadest range of device containment alternatives.

And because the university wanted to help insure the reliability, performance and security of the network infrastructure, the team now relies on IronView Network Manager to provide the reporting tools necessary to keep the network up and running. When the university is ready to deploy VoIP, the FastIron GS switches provide the PoE, 10-Gigabit Ethernet, and redundant power the school needs for a flexible and cost-effective high-performance convergence solution at the network’s edge.

Together, Foundry Networks and Impulse Point delivered a more secure and protected university network while providing a framework to implement and manage endpoint security policies on end user access, anti-virus and anti-spyware protection, patch maintenance levels, and peer-to-peer file sharing.

“With Foundry Networks as our network foundation, and Impulse Point providing security policy control, West Chester University is prepared to continue meeting the technology needs of our students and staff,” concludes Laverty. “Best of all we know that we can rely on two highly committed partners to deliver a high level of service and support as our network requirements evolve.”

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— Steve Laverty,  
Director of Communication  
Infrastructure Services,  
West Chester University

## FOUNDRY NETWORKS

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