

Walsh University creates a divine wireless experience for students with Arista Networks

Highlights

- Walsh University is an independent, coeducational, Catholic Liberal Arts and Science institution in North Canton, Ohio. Currently Walsh enrolls nearly 3,000 students from 40 states, 35 different countries with more than 13,000 alumni worldwide.
- The main campus at Walsh has 10 residence halls, which provide housing to approximately 1,100 students during the school year. In the Summer of 2016, Walsh and Arista began a massive upgrade to the wireless network, beginning with student residence halls.

Benefits

- Reliable WiFi performance in high density residence halls
- Reduction of time spent on troubleshooting and management
- Scalable solution for future projects and deployments around campus
- Secured by Arista AirTight WIPs
- Responsive support teams throughout the sales process

Walsh University was founded by the Brothers of Christian Instruction in 1960. Nearly 60 years later, this independent university has become well known for its outstanding academic facilities, chapel, residence halls and unique educational programs. With a dedication to developing the students' mind, body and spirit, it is no wonder enrollment at Walsh has grown nearly 80% since 2002.

At Walsh University, the Office of Information Technology (OIT) provides their own mission statement that promises to enhance the educational process through the application of information systems. With this steady increase in student enrollment, the OIT quickly saw that the controller-based wireless network could not maintain adequate throughput for the growing number of devices connecting to it, and, more importantly, saw that students and faculty were unable to stay connected.



“Over the last three years we’ve seen the number of student devices triple. They’re each bringing three to four devices onto campus, which created a problem on the old network. Arista allows us to put more people onto one access point and not have students dropping off. Arista’s dashboard makes my life much easier. I can go into the dashboard and see right away how many users there are, the different types of operating systems, what access points are receiving the most traffic; then I can drill down into the WiFi area even further to take a look at the each individual user.”

– Rick Seivert, Network Administrator and Engineer, Walsh University



“As cyber attacks change in the future, more higher educational institutions are going to become targets. We not only need to keep our students protected, but we also need to keep our faculty’s personal accounts and information secure.”

– Brian Greenwell, Vice President of Administration and Chief Information Officer, Walsh University

The Bandwidth Bandits

Walsh IT dream team Brian Greenwell and Rick Seivert took a deeper look at usage on campus and quickly determined they needed to have better connectivity for their students, especially in the residence halls. Usage on campus throughout the daytime was on the lower end due to the fact that students were in class or studying. However, once the early evening hours set in IT would see a dramatic spike in traffic, often from one of the many streaming options like Hulu, Netflix or YouTube.

Most of these streaming applications alone are enough to burden a network’s throughput, but there is an additional factor that has been gaining popularity in the last few years – interactive gaming. Greenwell and Seivert have seen gaming skyrocket over the last two years and these gaming systems require very good throughput to function correctly. Walsh needed to have consistent bandwidth throughout, so whether students are back in their rooms studying, watching Netflix or playing games on Xbox, they would always have a positive experience.

A Reliable and Secure Solution

When Brian Greenwell, VP of Administration and CIO, talks about the state of IT in higher education, he focuses on a single key topic that is trending everywhere – security. It’s no secret that over the last few years, many large enterprises have become the targets of massive data breaches. What many do not realize is that universities are becoming one of the primary targets for hackers looking to gain access to valuable personal identifiable information (PII).

When it came time for Rick Seivert, Network Administrator, to begin his search for a new wireless vendor, he already knew exactly what his checklist looked like. Being tied to a controller was no longer an option, and Seivert needed a secure, cloud managed solution that would be able to support high density demands, allow for simple upgrades and scale for the future. By investing more into the cloud technology and not the hardware, Greenwell and Seivert have paved the way for Walsh and the Office of IT to scale with ease when it comes time to upgrade and enhance the network’s needs.

Seivert did his fair share of research and testing when he compared Arista Networks to Meraki, Aruba, AeroHive and Ruckus. In the end, Arista Networks became the vendor of choice due to its scalability, security, cloud technology and management. Walsh University has deployed Arista’s 802.11ac W-68 access points in student residence halls, and Arista’s C-120 and C-130 802.11ac Wave 2 access points in common areas that experience higher traffic.

Making the Life of IT a Little Easier

It’s not uncommon to hear a Network or IT Administrator refer to themselves as a “one-man show,” and that’s exactly what Rick Seivert is. As someone who is responsible for switching and routing, wireless, day-to-day operations of the network, security and student connectivity – he knows all too well the importance of efficiency and good time management. Any time he needed to run updates to the physical controller, it took a lot of time and money. And since IT is not a revenue generating department, they need to be extremely careful with how they chose

to spend their time and budget dollars. Luckily, with Arista Networks life got much easier for Rick. Using Arista Cognitive WiFi™, he is able to log in from virtually anywhere on campus (and beyond) to see exactly what is happening on the network, allowing for a massive reduction in total time spent troubleshooting.

When it came time for deployment, Seivert was pleasantly surprised to find that it only took six weeks to get Arista fully up and running, which was far less than the time they previously budgeted to the roll-out. In fact, Arista's access points were so easy to install using simple wall mounts and brackets, that their IT intern handled a majority of the physical installations over the summer break! In addition, the Arista Networks team was always on hand to help answer any questions and guide Seivert and his team throughout the deployment, ensuring the first day back for students and IT was a success.

About Walsh University

Walsh University is an independent, co-educational, Catholic and Liberal Arts and Science institution founded by the Brothers of Christian Instruction in 1960. Walsh University promotes academic excellence, diversity and is dedicated to a mission to develop leaders and service and others through valuebased education with an International perspective in Judeo- Christian tradition. The Walsh main campus has 26 buildings, 10 residence halls and is situated on 136 park-like acres in North Canton, Ohio. Walsh also includes four satellite campuses, three in the state of Ohio, and one just outside of Rome, Italy, which is a primary location for their global learning experience.

For more information visit Walsh University online at <https://www.walsh.edu/>



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