

Augustana University enrolls anti-ransomware protection

Malwarebytes gives IT team ‘set it and forget it’ freedom

INDUSTRY

Education

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Balance openness with simplicity

IT ENVIRONMENT

Windows Defender antivirus, firewalls

SOLUTION

Malwarebytes Endpoint Security

RESULTS

- Prevented ransomware and malware from gaining a foothold
- Significantly reduced time spent investigating, cleaning, and re-imaging users’ machines
- Increased endpoint protection without affecting user productivity

Business profile

Founded in 1860, Augustana is a selective, comprehensive university affiliated with the Lutheran Church. With more than 100 majors, minors and pre-professional programs for undergraduates, along with graduate degree and continuing education programs, the University is committed to enriching lives and fostering development by combining a foundation in the liberal arts with professional skill and advanced study.

We wanted to stop malware and potential ransomware infections with an enterprise-class solution. It had to be reliable, easy to implement, and centrally managed for reporting.

—Kevin Klawonn, Systems Administrator, ITS, Augustana University

Augustana serves more than 2,000 students from 33 states and 32 countries. Most are part of its residential community and call the 100-acre campus home. Graduate and continuing education programs serve students online and during times that are convenient for adult learners.

Business challenge

Balancing openness with simplicity

At Augustana University, research isn’t limited to graduate programs. Faculty and staff encourage undergraduate students to conduct research in every department across campus. The IT team continually walks a fine line between cyber protection and unrestricted Internet access on faculty, staff, and lab machines. About 50 percent of computers are Windows machines, about 50 percent are Macs, and there are a few Linux users.

“Security is always a concern at the forefront of our projects in IT,” said Kevin Klawonn, Systems Administrator in ITS at Augustana University. “How will a project affect sensitive information on the network? How do we protect it and the university’s reputation? At the same time, users want to just use their machines and have access to anything they need. It’s always a balance.”



Klawonn knew that it was only a matter of time before ransomware would show up on campus. The university had several malware incidents, and IT was beginning to see infections more frequently. When a lab machine was infected, it was easy to reboot it and clear it. However, if a staff or faculty machine was infected, the IT team had to clean or re-image it. They were spending more and more time going to offices around campus to remediate infected machines.

“We wanted to stop malware and potential ransomware infections with an enterprise-class solution,” said Klawonn. “It had to be reliable, easy to implement, and centrally managed for reporting.”

The solution

Malwarebytes Endpoint Security

Klawonn and his team went straight to Malwarebytes. Everyone on the team was familiar with the consumer version and now they looked seriously at Malwarebytes Endpoint Security for the university's new solution. They liked what they saw and moved forward with deployment.

“Implementation was straightforward,” said Klawonn. “We just set up the Management Console, created the clients and installed them. We pushed some installs out through the Management Console, we did a few one-off manual installations, and some we scripted. Malwarebytes got an “A” for ease of implementation right off the bat.”

Simply set and forget

Augustana University hasn't had any ransomware or malware infections on Malwarebytes-protected machines since deployment. Kevin says that his favorite Malwarebytes feature is the “install it and forget about it as much as possible” capability. He uses Management Console reports to ensure that machines are updated and to see what Malwarebytes has blocked.

“Malwarebytes setup is simple,” he said. “Management is simple. It's simple for end users who, for the most part, never know that it's running on their machine. I just look at reports to make sure everyone is up to date.”

Stop and alert

The Augustana IT team devotes time to educating faculty and staff users about cyberthreats. When malware does get in, Malwarebytes stops it and alerts the team. Klawonn and the help desk receive Malwarebytes email alerts when malware or website access is blocked. A help desk staff member then contacts the user to do a full scan or goes to the faculty office and has a look.

“Malwarebytes is an enterprise-class solution that definitely stops malware and ransomware from getting past endpoints,” said Klawonn. “I know it's effective and the alerts prove it.”




Just the way they like it

Malwarebytes has saved time for the IT team and freed them for working on other projects. In the past, IT or help desk staff spent hours manually investigating and cleaning potential malware infections or re-imaging machines.

“We just don't have that scenario anymore,” said Klawonn. “Malwarebytes does what it needs to do and I know it's working. Since we have other things to do, the more things we can forget about, the better. We like it that way.”

| About

Malwarebytes is the next-gen cybersecurity company that millions worldwide trust. Malwarebytes proactively protects people and businesses against dangerous threats such as malware, ransomware, and exploits that escape detection by traditional antivirus solutions. The company's flagship product combines advanced heuristic threat detection with signature-less technologies to detect and stop a cyberattack before damage occurs. More than 10,000 businesses worldwide use, trust, and recommend Malwarebytes. Founded in 2008, the company is headquartered in California, with offices in Europe and Asia, and a global team of threat researchers and security experts.

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