

THE FE COLLEGE LEADER



HOW SAFE ARE STUDENTS ON YOUR COLLEGE'S NETWORK?

Do not doubt that many students are leading double lives. While they join us in the “real” world where older generations are confident of the dangers and risks at play, they also live in the virtual world where the rules are being rewritten on a daily basis. They may not be physically loitering on seedy street corners, but they are certainly tempted by equally unsavoury corners of online environments where they are less visible to us and therefore more at risk — or even a risk to others.

The online and offline worlds are often indistinguishable for young people: collusion on homework, anxieties about relationships, confrontations — whatever happens offline is reflected online and vice versa, with conversations and situations seamlessly spilling out and mutating across hundreds of digital platforms.

Cases of bullying, sexual grooming, online abuse, and gambling and gaming addiction unrelentingly feature in the media, safeguarding procedures in colleges are increasingly the subject of scrutiny. But how can college leaders actually know what their students — and their staff — are doing online? How can they be certain that their networks are not being used for illegal or inappropriate purposes?

Initially, many believed that “whatever was caused by technology could be cured by technology”, and so colleges installed blocking and filtering software to prevent access to harmful material. However, this approach is flawed. Many safe and useful pages are blocked unnecessarily — and the average tech-savvy, determined sixteen-year-old is perfectly able to set up a proxy server to bypass the network and access any site without the college being aware.

Continued overleaf



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Welcome to this spring 2014 edition of *The Leader*. Once again, we have endeavoured to keep the content interesting and informative, to provide our readers with food for thought.

I would particularly like to draw your attention to our lead article, which explores the issue of cyber bullying. It looks at the risks that students can be exposed to in the online world and offers guidance on some simple steps that colleges can take in order to help protect students from cyber bullying and other online risks, while at college.

You will also find an article on asset tracking, which explores the benefits that can be gleaned from modern asset management technologies — how they can save time and money and help you to more effectively keep track of your college's equipment and other assets.

In addition, we have included an article looking at the issue of building works on the college grounds — the risks they create and the insurance protection you may need — as well as a Q&A with Teresa Hughes, general manager at Securus Software Ltd.

As ever, I hope you find *The Leader* an interesting read. If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions for future articles, please get in touch.

Moreover, blocking and filtering fails to educate young people about safe boundaries since they miss out on the opportunity to learn through making informed, responsible choices about their online behaviour.

Many colleges have found a solution in network monitoring. This alerts college leaders to any harmful or illegal material that is accessed or generated on the college network, making it easier to detect issues before they get out of hand. Monitoring also flags up the use of proxy servers to circumvent the Acceptable Use Policy.

Teresa Hughes is a former police officer now working with Securus Software, a network monitoring system used by more than 3,200 colleges and schools. Hughes believes more and more educationalists understand that online safety is about behaviour, not technology:

“The challenges that colleges experience aren’t really about the abuse of technology — they’re about real-life problems that have always been there but which have now found a new channel of expression. The problem is that the permanent nature of the interaction online — and the size of the audience — means that the impact can be even greater.”

“At least 20 children and adolescents a year commit suicide because of being bullied”.*

Monitoring software can also highlight more serious welfare issues and so enable colleges to intervene. Hughes explains:

“We’ve had cases of young people researching how to commit suicide whilst at college. If those sites are blocked, the young person will simply go elsewhere to find that information and the opportunity to support them — and potentially to save their life — will have been lost.”

So what else can colleges do to protect young people? Hughes offers the following tips:

- Both young people and adults are more likely to take risks online than offline because we feel inherently “safer” behind a screen. Online safety education and training needs to break down this misconception.
- The three key areas that colleges should address are: understanding the risks, being aware of the consequences, and knowing how to get help.
- Young people need online safety sessions to take place regularly so that they are better able to retain the information and respond to emerging threats.
- Responding appropriately when things go wrong is vital, such as involving other agencies (for example the police), holding an awareness-raising assembly, initiating classroom discussions, or speaking to a child one-to-one.

Every college must be alert to the threats posed by online environments, both in terms of student welfare and to the college’s own reputation if its network is misused. Confronting these threats thoughtfully and proportionately will continue to be a challenge to which colleges must rise.

*Source: Beatbullying — VIRTUAL VIOLENCE II: Progress and Challenges in the Fight against Cyberbullying 2012.

DO YOU KNOW?

45 FE colleges are either lead or co-sponsors of academies

Source: AoC College Key Facts 2013-14

FAST FACT

STAY ON TRACK

Stephen Laing of assettrac explains the benefits of using asset-tracking technology in managing insurance claims.

An FE college with 5,000 students typically holds around 15,000 items of equipment and fixed assets, both on and off campus. Not surprisingly, tracking all these items without computer assistance is a laborious and expensive job. Add a changeable college environment into the mix, where property is constantly purchased, moved, inspected, and disposed of, and the job starts to look almost impossible.

But it doesn’t have to be that way. Fast, paperless methods of tracking not only “who has what and where”, but “who had what and where” makes life easier for administrators, and they assist in defending the college’s reputation through audit trails of safety and maintenance routines.

Using labels and hand-held scanners, these systems save time and boost security too. Modern cloud-based programmes can report instantly who is doing what and when, providing real time oversight whenever and wherever it is required.

How can asset tracking benefit insurance claims?

One of the primary benefits of cloud-based tracking is in procurement — such systems ensure administrators always have access to an accurate replacement cost on all assets.

And this knowledge has real benefits in terms of insurance, particularly in the optimising of sums insured. That is, accurate valuations ensure colleges don’t waste money on too-high premiums or, through under-insurance, leaving themselves out of pocket in the event of a claim.

Using technology to create and maintain an asset register transforms the inventory process. Managing assets is no longer an inefficient chore, but a highly efficient process that saves time and money, and plays a vital role in managing risk.

BUILDING WORKS: DON'T GET HOT UNDER THE COLLAR

In November 2013, the government announced plans to unlock around £500million in funding for FE college building expansion and upgrade works — funding that will support 50 colleges around the country.

There is no doubting the benefits these projects will bring, but it is also vitally important to be aware of the risks that building works can create, and protect against them effectively.

Manage the Risks

Before building work starts, consult with your architect or project manager to establish the insurance obligations under the terms of your contract. You may need to arrange additional cover in respect of the structure together with the contents, works, and all unfixed materials. If the planned works are in respect of a property insurance claim, your insurer may require you to use its supplier network, or it will ask for repair and replacement estimates before work starts and it decides how to settle your claim. So remember to always advise your broker when any building work is planned.

When employing contractors, you should check they are competent and experienced in that particular type of work, but it is also essential that you satisfy yourself that they have suitable insurances against public liability and employers' liability risks. Ask to see certificates of insurance, which should evidence liability indemnity limits appropriate to the scale and scope of the works and the values at risk.

When onsite, all workmen should be shown where fire extinguishers are and told who to contact, and how, in the event of an emergency. During the contract period the site should be inspected at the end of each day to ensure it has been left hazard free.

Hot Works

Building work may lead to the introduction of additional perils, such as the application of heat through the use of blowlamps, heat guns, cutting torches and welding apparatus.

In this situation, you should implement a hot work procedure involving the completion of a hot work permit. This will help to ensure contractors obtain permission from an authorised person before starting work, and put in place fire prevention precautions before, during, and after the works take place. In addition, reviewing a hot work permit checklist will help you to prepare for any works, giving consideration to fire protection, the surrounding area of the work, and equipment used.

The message is simple. Don't jeopardise the benefits of building works by taking unnecessary risks. Do take the time to understand, mitigate, and protect against these risks — and, if you need help, contact your insurance broker well before the works begin.

For further advice and a "hot works" checklist please contact Marsh today.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Fraud: In the previous issue of *The Leader* we reported on supplier or "mandate" fraud committed against two colleges which saw circa £2million in payments made to fraudsters who advised the colleges, over the phone, that the contractors' banking details had changed and that the next payment for works completed should be made to a new bank account — the details of which were then offered. All colleges are urged to remain vigilant when dealing with notifications of changes of bank account from their suppliers, and, if necessary, to review their procedures for dealing with any changes.

College Trips: If the college is planning any 2014 trips, make sure you avoid the pitfalls. For instance, a DIY approach to putting together a trip might seem attractive from a financial point of view, but could see the college deemed a "tour organiser" under the Package Travel Regulations — which would leave it open to legal action should something go wrong. Remember, that if something does go wrong during the trip, always call your insurer before incurring additional costs.

Did You Know: As a Marsh FE college client, in the first year of a Long Term Undertaking a bursary of £1,000 is available to you to help fund agreed risk improvements. These might be physical improvements, such as an alarm upgrade, or other measures, such as training. Many colleges have found this bursary extremely useful — for further information contact our team at further.education@marsh.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS



If you would like to talk to us in person, why not come and see Marsh at the following event:

3–4 June AoC Annual Conference,
Birmingham



TERESA HUGHES — GENERAL MANAGER, SECURUS SOFTWARE LTD



Where were you born? Erlangen, Germany.

Where did you study? Brooklands Technical College, Weybridge.

What was your first ever job? I joined Surrey Police as a uniformed police constable and then progressed to become a detective. I specialised in investigations involving online

offences against children.

How did you become involved in the education sector? I took a career break from the police to work for a charity called the Lucy Faithfull Foundation (LFF). LFF works predominately in the area of the prevention of child sexual abuse. As part of my role I delivered internet safety messages to teachers, children, and parents. I felt that the knowledge I gained from working with offenders gave me an insight into how they may try to engage online with children. This provides an excellent starting point for developing safety messages.

What is your role with Securus Software Ltd? I am general manager, which I love because it enables me to use my child protection knowledge to ensure that our software systems continually reflect what children and young people are doing online. The role also allows me to visit schools and colleges, to train teachers, students, and parents, which I always enjoy as it's great to get feedback "on the ground".

How does Securus work with schools and colleges? Using constantly updated "trigger" keywords that encompass the wide range of threats faced by young people, Securus flags up potential child protection issues manifesting on a

network. This empowers colleges to provide an immediate, informed response which is often based on the visual record captured by Securus. The system also facilitates lasting improvements in student behaviour and safety, helping them to recognise unsafe situations and encouraging them to use new technologies responsibly.

If you could convince schools and colleges to do one thing differently, what would it be? Sometimes we find that online safety is perceived solely as a network manager's responsibility; in fact, it is intrinsic to whole-college safeguarding. If a student indicates on a social networking site that they're feeling suicidal, that is not a technical issue... so I always try to convince them that it's the safeguarding lead who needs to be involved.

What is the most important challenge the education sector faces right now? Marrying up the huge learning opportunities presented by new technologies in the classroom with an increased need for safeguarding has to be up there... teenagers are natives of the digital age — and we're not!

What is the best bit of professional advice you've ever been given? Always take a moment to step back and assess a situation before making decisions.

What book are you currently reading? *Celebrating Life* by Jonathan Sacks.

Favourite film? *Kill Bill*.

First ever car? VW Beetle.

What is your greatest indulgence? Travel and coffee!

Preferred weekend getaway destination: I love Barcelona!

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