

Independent School System Protects Community from Ransomware, Phishing, Malware

“Keeping our kids safe online, while having access to all of our resources are our most important requirements. Guardian Digital delivered solidly on both of them, and more.”

Richard Wilson

Director of Technology,
Itasca Independent Schools

If used effectively, the Internet can be a consummate communication and information channel. Part of maintaining its benefit is ensuring the information managed by the system on which it's running remains secure. At the Itasca Independent School District in Texas, Internet and email have become core communication methods for teachers and administrators alike. Secure web and email services are essential to the organization's continued productivity.

“Keeping the district connected to parents, state services and each other is the most important aspect of my daily routine,” writes Richard Wilson, director of technology for Itasca Schools. Guardian Digital EnGarde Email Security Gateway provided all the services Wilson needed for his organization to securely communicate online and protect them against malicious email attachments, viruses, and unwanted email.





Founded in 1900, the Itasca Independent School District is home to 650 students K-12 and approximately 100 teachers and administrators. An educational institution with three separate schools teaching varied disciplines, users explore many different places on the Internet. As not to limit website availability while ensuring Internet resources remain effective, preventative security measures such as virus and web content scanning are implemented to maintain the integrity of the network. Having few IT professionals on staff, time management is critical. Not possessing the resources to continually secure and maintain competing systems they had in place, Wilson began the search for a simpler, more secure alternative.

Simple, Secure Alternative

Although ease of management was a top priority, system security was still the foremost concern. Retaining confidential student and teacher accounting information on their network, it was important for Itasca to implement a system that would accurately maintain the data and allow administrators to control and monitor who has access to the district's information.

User privacy is a monumental issue among administrators. Protecting the students' and teachers' privileged information such as performance evaluations, grades and health records is a principal obligation. Guardian Digital's comprehensive access controls allow Itasca administrators to regulate what information can be accessed through their network protecting the privacy of their students and staff.

With the Internet quickly evolving into an incomparable learning and communication tool, network security is important not only for privacy but for functionality. Teachers, students and administrators at Itasca have become dependent on email and Internet for communication and information. "We rely heavily on these services for interaction with the State and all aspects of communicating with one another. Availability, reliability and





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Needing a simple to administer, cost effective, secure and reliable web, email and DNS solution, Itasca Schools turned to Guardian Digital for an answer.

Guardian Digital’s enterprise suites of email security applications are engineered to be secure and easy to manage. Integrated security features significantly reduce Internet threats supplying unsurpassed reliability and network productivity. The simplified web-based management system makes configuration and maintenance quick and easy resulting in less administration time and lower IT costs.

Guardian Digital enhances the inherent benefits of open source with their unparalleled security expertise and adds to them with their simple to use web-based administration capabilities.

The level of security provided by open source software is remarkable. With thousands of developers collaborating in a multitude of environments security vulnerabilities are identified and patched quickly. Typically, however, administration of open source software takes a substantial amount of time and expertise.

The Guardian Digital WebTool alleviates those requirements by creating a simple to use web-based management system drastically reducing the time, expense and complexity of maintenance. The combination of open source benefits, Guardian Digital’s expertise and customized design made Protection Suite Enterprise Edition an obvious choice for Itasca’s email platform.





The Clear Decision

After considering many competing products including Symantec, Itasca schools implemented Guardian Digital's award-winning EnGarde Email Security Gateway, with comprehensive virus and spam protection, for all district-wide users.

EnGarde Email Security Gateway is an enterprise-class email security platform engineered to enable administrators to quickly and cost-effectively build a complete and totally secure online presence while simultaneously preventing Internet threats. This comprehensive solution includes email and other security services including DNS to reduce the time and resources required to build and maintain a secure and effective network.

EnGarde Email Security Gateway provides all the tools necessary to build a complete corporate email messaging system. WebMail make it the ideal organizational communication system. Encrypted email connectivity and integrated spam and virus protection keep the network safe from unsolicited emails, malicious content and multiple other Internet threats.

Comprised of a unique collection of open source tools together with the security expertise of Guardian Digital, EnGarde Email Security Gateway best addressed their need for applications focusing on security, reliability, and ease of management. "Guardian Digital outperformed competitive products in both cost-effectiveness and ease of management. Our decision was clear," states Wilson.

Delivering Simplified Management, Cost-effective Security

Itasca Independent School District is currently operating Guardian Digital EnGarde Email Security Gateway, DNS and Web services on their network. Having one system providing all their security and productivity applications has significantly reduced administration and management duties, freeing up time and resources for more crucial responsibilities.





Knowing that security applications are an important function of any organization's network, Itasca is very pleased with the level of security Guardian Digital has provided them. Lacking spam and virus protection on prior systems, the ability to configure security settings to the specific needs of the organization is of great value to system administrators.

With personalized spam and virus settings intact, Itasca Schools reported seeing a significant reduction in internal virus situations and spam occurrences since applying the EnGarde Email Security Gateway to their system. "I am finally able to control all unsolicited junk email that my teachers and staff have been complaining about for the past few years saving everyone valuable time," writes Wilson.

Guardian Digital takes the best open source tools available and creates business-specific applications much more secure and at a cost much less than proprietary counterparts. The cost-effective solutions presented by Guardian Digital have allowed the district to enhance productivity and security, ease management duties, and keep IT costs down making available more of their budget for teacher training.

Committed Partnership

Based on the incomparable security and efficiency of Guardian Digital products, services and support, Itasca Independent Schools and Guardian Digital have formed a solid partnership to continue to bring secure and effective Internet and email services to the dedicated teachers and students of the district. As Guardian Digital continues the innovation and development of existing and new products and services, Itasca Independent School District will upgrade their software as technology evolves and purchase additional products as their requirements change.

The amount of overall traffic on the Itasca network is down by nearly 70 percent as spam and unsolicited email are blocked at the gateway. Itasca users can now return to being



Challenges

- » Needed Solution to Protect Children and Staff
- » Limited Budget
- » Inexperienced Users
- » Email Primary Form of Communication

Requirements

- » Simplified Management
- » Concerned with Availability and User Privacy
- » Extensive Support Services
- » Cost Effective Solutions
- » User and Network Controls

Solutions

- » EnGarde Email Security Gateway: Control Email Usage and Eliminate Spam
- » Managed Services: Monitor Email and Network Activities, Troubleshoot and Resolve Technical Incidents
- » Premium Support Services: Automatic Updates, Built-in Alerts, Customized Security Improvements

Results

- » Enhanced Network Security
- » Reduce Spam by >99%
- » ISecure Web Presence
- » Increased User Productivity
- » Ability to Access Internal Network From Any Location
- » Guardian Digital Outperformed

productive with email while keeping their users secure.

“The integrated features furnished by Guardian Digital have delivered an effortless and cost-effective way to create a powerful Internet presence for the entire district. The simple administration, the notification and simplicity of updates and built-in monitoring tools ensure the consistent security of our network while leveraging my existing resources. We see daily instances of virus detection with our users going many places all over the Internet; it is nice to be able to know that we have good security and virus scanning in place,” said Wilson.

