



# Deakin University gets smart about cybersecurity





Deakin University has an ambitious digital transformation plan in place, setting the bar for how higher education should be administered in a digitally disrupted world. Behind the scenes of this digital advancement, the Victorian university knew cybersecurity needed attention.

With thousands of students, teachers and guests moving through the university's open IT network each year, Deakin recognised that it was exposed and a potential target for hackers. Over the years, the university had indeed been subject to numerous cyber attacks, particularly through malware and phishing, yet overall suffered minimal damage. Deakin knew that it had been lucky.

But luck only goes so far and, with a global rise in internet warfare, the university felt it was necessary to put in place a new strategy that would strengthen its cybersecurity protection.

“Cybersecurity is a really big problem, and we really don't know what's out there in the wild wild west,” explains Craig Warren, Executive Director of ICT Infrastructure Services at Deakin University.



# Vulnerabilities

As a first step, Deakin University conducted an assessment of its overall security position, wanting to determine exactly where it was vulnerable. The proactive detection of cyber threats proved a weak spot.

“In the past we’ve really relied on someone to tell us that something unusual is happening,” says Warren. “We really wanted to advance our capability in being able to detect advanced threats.”

Like many organisations, Deakin’s approach to cyber security wasn’t particularly structured. There wasn’t a clear security plan in place and multiple vendors were being used, applying different solutions to different aspects. There was no unified approach and this left Deakin exposed. If it wanted to avoid

a large-scale cyber attack, the university knew this strategy was unsustainable.

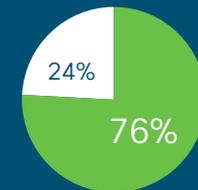
“The cyber security ecosystem is complex and evolving every single day,” says William Confalonieri, Chief Digital Officer at Deakin University. “By partnering with Cisco we have removed a big portion of the complexity and risk.”

Warren agrees, describing the cyber security marketplace as a “kaleidoscope” of solutions, with the real challenge making sure of a seamless integration between products, while also maintaining simplicity and exerting minimal effort. He explains that going with a single supplier and utilising a single ecosystem of products means a much more effective, cohesive and uncomplicated outcome for Deakin.

## Many people, many locations

### Students

Total: 54,377



- On-campus
- Cloud/online students  
\*13,054 students are cloud/online students



### Staff

Total: 4488  
Academic: 2057  
General: 2431



### Offices

International offices: 8  
Learning centres: 6  
Research institutes: 4  
Strategic research centres: 13



**“It’s really naive for anyone playing in the disruptive digital space not to invest the same research and hard work into the cybersecurity space.”**

**William Confalonieri**  
Chief Digital Officer,  
Deakin University

## Solutions

Under Cisco’s Enterprise Licensing Agreement, Deakin University now has access to Cisco’s full suite of security solutions – along with any products added and acquired in the future. To make the most of what’s on offer, the university has commenced a two-stage onboarding process. First, it’s prioritised the implementation of products that are going to deliver maximum value with minimum effort. For example, Cisco Umbrella was one of the first cyber security products the university rolled out, because it very quickly and easily provides a robust first line of defence against cyber threats.

This was followed by the deployment of Cisco Email Security, which protects against phishing and threats coming in via email. Next on the roadmap, Deakin University will be implementing the products designed to protect against more advanced threats, such as Stealthwatch, Identity Services Engine and next-gen firewalls.

Given the number of people using Deakin’s IT network, and the mix of functions they’re using it for, the university needed flexibility in the security controls it could apply. It might want to prevent undergraduate students from accessing plagiarism sites, but allow academics researching the subject legitimately to have access.

### A staged implementation ensured early wins for Deakin.



Stage 1

First line of defence against threats:  
Cisco Umbrella



Stage 2

Protection against phishing and email threats: Cisco Email Security



Stage 3

Protection against advanced threats: Stealthwatch, Identity Services Engine, next-gen firewalls



A blanket, high-level approach was impractical, so Deakin now has flexibility.

“Previously, we only had the capability to block everyone. Now we can do it on a cohort basis and be much more granular,” says Warren.

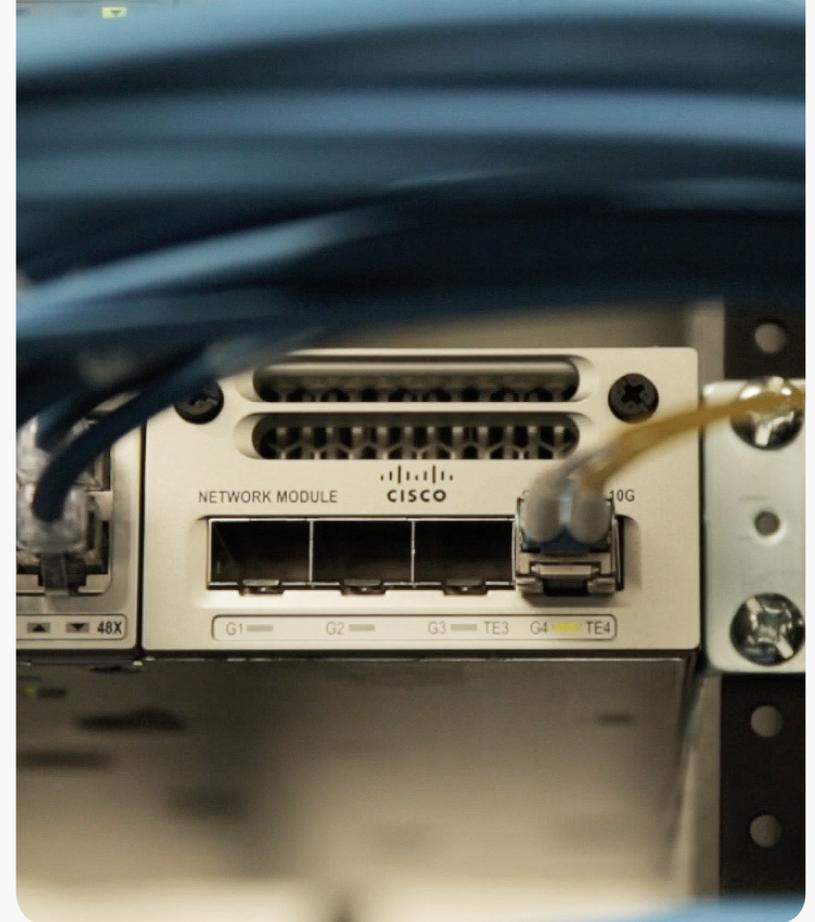
The university also uses Cisco’s Cyber Range in a teaching capacity, both to educate students and up-skill staff in how to defend against cyber warfare.

“Cyber Range allows you to be both attacker and defender, so you can practice from both sides of the attack,” explains Warren.

This has helped equip students for the workforce, while also ensuring university employees are highly skilled in this area.

Overall, Deakin University now has a greater level of confidence in its cyber security efforts. It also appreciates that it’s been able to achieve this very simply, by leveraging the expertise of a strategic partner, rather than expending the resource and energy required to be proficient in this domain itself.

“It’s really naive for anyone playing in the disruptive digital space not to invest the same research and hard work into the cybersecurity space,” says Confalonieri.



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**Craig Warren**  
Executive Director – ICT Infrastructure Services,  
Deakin University



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