Dream of a world without walls.

Edith Hignard was inspired by the thought of learning without limits.
KNOWLEDGE IS BOUNDLESS.
WE DON’T COMPARTMENTALIZE.

As a young industrial engineering student in Lille, France, Edith Hignard loved the freedom of academic life.

Theory and practice were brought together, every day, in a single discipline. New ideas and approaches were freely discussed, challenged, and improved. And as Hignard’s school, L’École des Hautes Études d’Ingénieur, declares, its training prepares students for “a world that no longer knows boundaries.”

The newly qualified engineer emerged with a personal vision that would shape her career. She would create her own place of learning for a world without boundaries.

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Today, as director of the Talis Business School, Hignard has brought her world-without-walls to life. She has created an imaginative, networked space in which study, research, training, and personal development are seen as one integrated activity.
But how does this vision work in practice? For one thing, the school doesn’t have a single, physical location. Founded in Bordeaux in 1981, it’s now a learning network that stretches from Bergerac, Bayonne, and Périgueux to Paris.

The school depends on a stable, available, and secure Internet. Students freely access learning resources according to their training goals and personal aspirations. They study and train both on- and off-campus, with around 2,300 on work-experience programs and others accessing course content remotely, via distance-learning materials.

WE BELIEVE IN CULTIVATING NETWORKS TO INFORM AND EXCHANGE

The school offers a host of training and education courses, from Commerce, Management, and Finance to Marketing, Communications, and HR. Qualifications range from foundation courses to Master’s degrees, and from MBAs to state diplomas and certificates recognized by the RNC, France’s public certification body.

Relationships with employers are actively nurtured. Industry speakers visit the school regularly. And networking is strongly encouraged.

As Hignard comments: “Our mission is to promote meetings between professionals and students. We believe this two-way exchange is crucial. It allows us to unlock, alongside academic teaching, other ways of understanding the world of business.”

HOW CISCO UMBRELLA HELPS TALIS BRING ITS VISION TO LIFE

A key challenge for a fast-growing school like Talis was how to manage student and staff Internet access across multiple sites, while maintaining a secure network.

The school also has a legal duty to be able to identify all network users.

Talis chose the Cisco Umbrella solution for three simple reasons.

First, no new kit was needed to set it up. Second, the solution was deployed in minutes via the cloud. And third, it provided secure, personalized Internet access for all users.

The school now also benefits from Umbrella’s aggregated traffic statistics, which helps the IT team easily optimize network functions as user demand fluctuates.

Cisco Umbrella has enabled Edith Hignard to realize her core vision of an imaginative space in which information is freely and safely exchanged – complete with a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policy.

“Through our school, our training, and our partners,” Hignard beams, “we open doors each day for young people, giving them the tools they need for lifelong personal development.”