Action1

Exceed Learning Partnership Implements Action1 to Support Safe and Seamless Learning for Thousands of Students

Bringing autonomous endpoint management in-house supports Trust to eliminate security risks and enables every child to stay productive every moment

Company Profile:

Exceed Learning Partnership is a multi-academy trust based in Doncaster, UK, comprising 10 academies, including nine primary schools and one secondary school.

Headquarters: Doncaster, United Kingdom

Industry: Education

Website: **www.elp.org.uk**

Endpoints Managed: 1,000

Shifting to In-House Operations to Regain Control Over Vulnerabilities and Patching

Exceed Learning Partnership Trust operates ten academies, driven by its core mission to empower young people with the knowledge, skills, and mindset necessary for success. A key priority for the Trust is to ensure all academies are exceptionally well-equipped to support their pupils and employees, fostering an environment of uninterrupted learning and robust security that promotes development and growth for every child.

The Trust's comprehensive ICT strategy focuses on delivering a seamless teaching and learning experience, implementing strong cybersecurity measures to align with GDPR and Department for Education standards, and enhancing connectivity and real-time insight into IT systems.

The IT team at Exceed Learning Partnership sought to optimise their IT operations, particularly in managing system updates and security. They recognised the importance of having clear visibility into the

Key Benefits:

- Improved visibility and consistent patching of OS and third-party applications across distributed endpoints.

- Continued compliance with Department for Education (DfE) cybersecurity guidance and GDPR.

- Increased IT efficiency and control by transitioning to in-house operations.

status of their devices and maintaining proactive control over security updates. **"In education, trust is everything. Maintaining strong cybersecurity hygiene is essential to prevent data loss and ensure uninterrupted learning. Any incident stemming from unaddressed software issues could damage trust with parents, harm our reputation, and result in financial losses,"** explained Wayne Kilner, Director of ICT at Exceed Learning Partnership.

To enhance their IT capabilities, the IT department decided to manage their system security and updates internally. With a team of six IT professionals, Wayne needed a solution that would streamline the detection and resolution of potential security issues across all distributed devices, while also integrating smoothly into their existing IT infrastructure.

Finding the Trusted Solution to Rely On

The IT team evaluated several solutions and ultimately chose Action1 for its usability and robust patching automation capabilities, which fully met their needs for managing updates for both OS and third-party applications. Wayne particularly appreciated Action1's real-time vulnerability assessment and powerful APIs, which elevated their endpoint visibility to the next level.

In addition, the IT team appreciated the assistance from Action1's system engineers, who helped check their setup, fine-tune configurations, and recommended additional reporting options to support a smooth transition to in-house patching and vulnerability management.

Eliminating Security Gaps and Transforming IT Operations with Action1

After deploying Action1, Wayne and his team quickly took control of their environment. Within weeks of deployment, they had established a consistent patching routine based on the severity of vulnerabilities by automating patch deployment for both OS and third-party applications with custom policies.

Wayne and his colleagues benefit from Action1's Software Repository, which streamlines patching for third-party applications widely used by students and employees, including Adobe, VLC, 7-Zip, and others. **"A lot of school-based applications—especially open-source or low-level tools—are easy to overlook, but they can be quickly compromised if a vulnerability is found and left unpatched,"** noted Wayne, emphasising the importance of consistent third-party patching.

Real-time visibility became a cornerstone of security operations at Exceed Learning Partnership. The Action1 platform provides the IT team with comprehensive insights into distributed endpoints, including vulnerabilities, outdated software, missing patches, and deployment statuses. The platform's robust API capabilities also enabled the team to integrate Action1 with their existing tools. They connected Action1 to Grafana to build a centralised, comprehensive reporting dashboard, enabling data-driven decisions and proactive security measures.

Action1 plays a key role in ensuring Exceed Learning Partnership continues to meet compliance requirements, including GDPR and the Department for Education's (DfE) cybersecurity guidance. The IT team can confidently demonstrate strong cybersecurity hygiene, protecting the reputation and pupils of the Trust. **"Action1 ticks all the boxes when it comes to meeting cybersecurity audit requirements around patch management and vulnerability control,"** said Wayne.

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Action1 feels like an additional team member, taking care of vulnerabilities and reducing security risks so that teaching and learning can continue safely and without disruption. It's a foundational part of how we meet our cybersecurity obligations and protect student data.

Wayner Kilner, Director of ICT at Exceed Learning Partnership

Another game-changer for the IT department was Action1's scripting capabilities. The team leverages both built-in and custom scripts to automate tasks like server password resets, extracting Active Directory data into Google Sheets for centralised reporting, and enforcing data hygiene by clearing download folders after seven days. This not only elevates security but also saves the team time and effort, enabling them to focus on strategic initiatives.

With Action1, Exceed Learning Partnership is fully equipped to enable a seamless and secure experience for both pupils and employees, supporting outstanding teaching and learning. Action1 has also become a trustworthy solution the IT team can rely on in the long-term, helping them meet their key strategic goals, drive operational excellence, and expand the Trust's growth opportunities in the years ahead.

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