Higher Education Institutions Under Fire

Higher education institutions have long been targets for ransomware and other cyber-attacks. The FBI reports that ransomware attacks alone impacted nearly 1,700 U.S. schools, colleges, and universities in 2020. In just one-month of 2021, educational organizations suffered over 5.8 million malware incidents, or 63 percent of all such attacks.

The volume and sophistication of cyber threats continues to grow rapidly, placing sensitive data at unprecedented risk. Demands to protect that data are rising, as higher education institutions find themselves subject to more stringent cybersecurity and privacy expectations and mandates from the public and private sectors.

What Makes Them Appealing Targets?

Higher education institutions handle, process, and store large amounts of sensitive data, from the personally identifiable information (PII) of staff, students, and families to the intellectual property (IP) developed in collaboration with government agencies and academic and business partners. That data is distributed throughout the institution’s enterprise. Departments and colleges operate semi-autonomously. Research programs acquire and implement their own IT infrastructures. This decentralized, heterogeneous environment limits visibility and control of data and makes institutions more vulnerable to compromise from external and internal threat actors.

The Move to the Digital Campus Raises the Stakes

The coronavirus pandemic increased the urgency to create the digital campus. Higher education institutions must seamlessly and fully support remote learning, work, and research immediately or fall behind their competitors. But digital transformation introduces new risks and data protection requirements institutions must be prepared to address.

Data now resides in countless apps, both on-premises and in the cloud. Managed and unmanaged assets are being used to handle data as students, faculty, administrative staff, and partners look to engage from anywhere, at any time, on any device or network. These circumstances severely hinder perimeter-based security’s effectiveness. They further reduce the already limited visibility and control institutions used to have, placing PII and IP in greater peril.

Maintaining the Security Status Quo Isn’t an Option

Successful ransomware and other cyber-attacks compromise data, disrupt operations, create financial loss, and damage trust. Regulatory and other security mandate shortfalls put accreditation and funding in jeopardy. To address enhanced data protection and compliance requirements, higher education institutions need cybersecurity that works no matter where data goes.

Legacy security solutions support a traditional network architecture and an outdated operating model. These solutions are tied to perimeters where data and users no longer reside exclusively, offering little insight and control over cloud-centric activities. Some institutions have begun migrating to cloud-delivered security, but these solutions often are deployed in isolation. Security gaps remain open as administrators must switch between consoles to get a clear view of status and performance.
Data Protection Requires a Unified Approach & a Comprehensive Security Solution

The Lookout Security Platform eliminates the need for a patchwork of underqualified point security solutions. The unified, converged platform includes natively built capabilities like Zero Trust Network Access, Cloud Access Security Broker, Data Loss Prevention, and Enterprise Digital Rights Management. Lookout offers the only product that can deliver comprehensive, consistent, end-to-end data protection, visibility, and control – from the endpoint users rely on to private apps inside data centers, cloud apps, and the internet - within a single pane of glass.

The Lookout Security Platform is purpose-built to support the higher education institution’s mission. By reducing the risk and impact of ransomware and other cyber-attacks – even as the network perimeter disappears and data sprawls across countless apps - institutions can more quickly and confidently create and maintain a secure, safe, compliant digital campus for remote learning, work, and collaboration.

About Lookout

Lookout is an integrated endpoint-to-cloud security company. Our mission is to secure and empower our digital future in a privacy-focused world where mobility and cloud are essential to all we do for work and play. We enable consumers and employees to protect their data, and to securely stay connected without violating their privacy and trust. Lookout is trusted by millions of consumers, the largest enterprises and government agencies, and partners such as AT&T, Verizon, Vodafone, Microsoft, Google, and Apple. Headquartered in San Francisco, Lookout has offices in Amsterdam, Boston, London, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto and Washington, D.C. To learn more, visit www.lookout.com and follow Lookout on its blog, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

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