



*“Application control is where Fortinet really comes into its own as we get much greater granularity, which in turn helps to ensure schools achieve their higher Ofsted e-safety rating.”*

– David Tindall  
 Managing Director  
 Talk Straight



## Business Challenge

Founded in 2007 and based in Leeds, Talk Straight delivers a range of telecommunications to businesses and schools across the UK, including hosted VoIP, Internet services (e.g. broadband) for business, schools broadband, business mobile phone solutions, inbound call handling, network and phone cabling.

Talk Straight’s primary route to market is in providing internet services to the education sector, and the company has a specialist division which provides safe, secure and affordable Internet solutions to hundreds of schools across the country. The company prides itself on understanding its customers’ needs, making appropriate recommendations and then backing this up with free, unlimited ongoing support for any telecoms issue they face.

Local Education Authorities increasingly are no longer providing networks for schools and are offering the service out to the market. Talk Straight has successfully secured a significant amount of this business. As part of its ongoing service, Talk Straight needed to implement both a security and filtering solution for its schools. Traditionally, Talk Straight has used Fortinet devices delivered at site, however, two years ago the company started the process of migrating towards a cloud-based solution, built on Fortinet.

## Details

**Customer Name:** Talk Straight  
**Industry:** MSSP for Education  
**Location:** Leeds, UK

## Challenges

- To offer a superior security solution for a vast number of schools migrated to a cloud solution
- Security needs to support schools in achieving Ofsted ‘Outstanding’ rating for e-safety

## Objectives

- To ensure the security solution is scalable and manageable at volume
- The system will offer increasing levels of self-management to schools

Such is the effectiveness and success of the Talk Straight cloud offering; that gives schools the very best in fast, safe and secure broadband at a cost that is affordable, that in May 2014 Talk Straight won the 2014 ISPA Award for Best Use of Business Cloud.

## Solutions

As David Tindall, Managing Director at Talk Straight, explains the company's role is to understand what schools need and facilitate it via their cloud offering. "With regards to IT security and UTM, Ofsted<sup>1</sup> has an inspection framework in place which makes specific reference to inspection of e-safety, and schools are rated accordingly. Our role is to ensure the service we supply helps them to achieve an Outstanding rating.

"We have worked closely with Fortinet on application control and this is where Fortinet really comes into its own as we get much greater granularity, which in turn helps to ensure schools achieve their higher Ofsted e-safety rating.

"Fortinet also has an excellent record in ensuring reliability. The team has worked closely with us to extract the full performance from the units. In this way we have made the security offer available to our entire customer base. By putting security in the cloud we can drop any of our customers into the security solution in a matter of days."

Fortinet's FortiGate™ products empower Managed Security Service Providers (MSSPs) with best-in-breed, adaptive security that fits any environment; small and medium businesses, to enterprise, data center and service provider networks. Combining the FortiOS™ Operating System with custom-built FortiASIC™ processors, FortiGate is designed for high performance, providing advanced protection from sophisticated, highly targeted attacks, without becoming a network bottleneck, crucial for a large MSSP environment.

Fortinet MSSPs also leverage customisable management and reporting tools along with a growing suite of emerging security products to increase recurring revenue streams and grow their subscriber base - all while controlling costs and improving service efficiencies.

"Our cloud offer is more profitable for the company," continues David Tindall. "It is Fortinet's strong background in the MSSP channel that has enabled this. If we had approached other vendors with a requirement for a cloud service offering they would have looked at me blankly. I know that because I've been to other vendors and they did look at me blankly. But Fortinet has always understood the market and have shared their vision with us."

## The Benefits

Cost, and increasingly ease of management, are the benefits being enjoyed by Talk Straight's customers, while a more profitable service is the benefit for Talk Straight. "Our customers currently use FortiAnalyzer for reporting and we are bringing FortiManager online. Thanks to the Virtual Domains structure they can log into their VDOMs and make their own changes. Even out of the box we are able to offer self-management for customers to use if they want it."

The current cloud platform is scaled to cater for well over a thousand schools and it can easily be expanded further.

"With so many schools coming onto the system, scalability is key," concludes David Tindall. "The system needs to scale massively and we need to ensure the platform is manageable at volume. We are working closely with Fortinet to get FortiManager in place and integrated with our back end systems. It's important that we maintain the same level of visibility and support that we are renowned for."

1. Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills UK



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