

# Large Northern Ireland college gains complete O365 security

South West College trusts Barracuda Total Email Protection



## Cloud migration and new security needs

As Technical Services Manager of South West College in Northern Ireland, George Frazer was in charge of managing the school's transition from on-premises email and productivity applications to Microsoft Office 365. In the process, he had to understand and respond to the different security challenges that exist in the cloud, and to meet those challenges with limited resources.

"Until about seven years ago, everything was on-premises," says Frazer. "Our Exchange server, a network firewall, a secure email gateway, and a web filter were all physical appliances that needed to be maintained and updated and so on. And one of the main drivers of migrating to the cloud is that we wanted to retire all that hardware and its associated costs."

It took a while to get there. "For the first three years, we only had student email hosted in Office 365," says Frazer. "Then we migrated staff email, and then in 2018 we switched over to SharePoint Online, and started using Teams as well."

Security was not yet coming up as a priority. However, data protection soon became an item of concern. "With SharePoint Online and Teams in full production, we had a lot of important data in the cloud," says Frazer. "And Microsoft's built-in data retention wasn't an adequate backup system."

## Discovering advanced solutions

Frazer's team began talking to peers at another Northern Ireland college. "They gave us a demonstration of Barracuda Essentials and Cloud-to-Cloud Backup," says Frazer. "And the backup solution really got our attention."

## Profile

- Large college with five main campuses spread across two counties
- Approximately 850 staff including support staff and full- and part-time lecturers
- Approximately 12,000 active student accounts on the college's network

## Challenges

- Need to secure email and protect data in Office 365
- Increasing numbers of evasive, sophisticated phishing attacks
- Need to streamline and accelerate incident-response processes
- Limited operating budget requiring stepwise approach to achieving comprehensive security

## Solution

- Barracuda Total Email Protection (includes Barracuda Essentials, Barracuda Sentinel, Barracuda PhishLine, Barracuda Cloud-to-Cloud Backup, and Barracuda Forensics and Incident Response)

## Results

- Dramatic reduction in phishing attacks
- Rapid, automated incident response slashes IT overhead
- Advanced, cloud-native backup ensures continuity in case of data loss
- Security-awareness training reduces risk of successful phishing

Not long after that demonstration, a technology reseller gave Frazer and his team a demonstration of Barracuda Sentinel, which uses advanced AI to detect phishing emails. “It was very impressive,” says Frazer. “But we were still focused on Cloud-to-Cloud Backup. Our operating budget put the whole Total Email Protection package out of reach for us in a given year. So we purchased licenses for the Essentials email gateway and archiving features and for Cloud-to-Cloud Backup, and got both solutions into full production in March 2020—just in time for lockdown. With everything going remote, it was a great relief to know that our email was being filtered and archived, and that our data was protected.”

Later in 2020, once South West College’s fiscal year had rolled over—refreshing their annual operating budget—Frazer and his team made sure to complete their Total Email Protection deployment by adding Sentinel and Forensics and Incident Response. “By that point phishing was getting to be a real problem for us, and a couple of staff members had been tricked,” says Frazer. “But as a college with students as young as fourteen, we also needed to police internal email communications, to combat foul language and bullying. So we also used keyword blocking to cut down on that sort of thing.”

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**George Frazer**

Technical Services Manager, South West College

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**Benefits beyond expectations**

With Total Email Protection in full production, Frazer and his team got many of the benefits they anticipated—and some that exceeded their expectations.

“When we activated Sentinel, the AI-powered email phishing detection really made a big difference—the number of phishing emails getting through went way down right away,”

says Frazer. “In just the past thirty days, we’ve quarantined well over 15,000 emails. We’ve allowed 93,000 and blocked 127,000.

“But what my team absolutely loved was the Forensics and Incident Response piece. They used to have to go hunting around the office checking everyone’s inbox and deleting phishing emails and finding out whether they had responded. But now it’s all automated, it’s taken care of very quickly in just a few clicks—it’s reduced a thirty-minute response to thirty seconds. And that’s not just saving time, it’s also greatly reducing the risk of someone falling for one of these attacks.”

Another part of Total Email Protection that Frazer’s team appreciates is the PhishLine security-awareness training system. “We’ve long wanted effective training to make our users better at spotting phishing emails,” says Frazer. “We tried a free tool from Trend Micro, but it was rather clunky and simplistic. And our in-house efforts using our learning management system didn’t include any way to track results. But when we got into Barracuda PhishLine, we were just blown away by the amount and variety of training materials, and how it tracks individual results. And the ability to send different simulated attacks to different users is fantastic.”

Frazer continues: “I’d also like to note that the control panel and reporting features are top-notch. It definitely saves time that we can control every part of Total Email Protection through a single dashboard. And it just shows you everything very clearly—I simply take a screenshot of it to use in my monthly report to my line manager.”

**A reliable security partner**

“I feel that we are in very good hands with Barracuda,” says Frazer. “The product is really excellent, and whenever there’s been a hiccup of any kind, the support we’ve gotten has been very responsive. I’m happy to recommend Barracuda Total Email Protection for anyone using Office 365.”

Learn more about  
**Barracuda Total Email Protection**

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