How the Cloud Disrupts Higher Ed Networks—and Why That’s Good
Higher education changed forever

After accelerating the adoption of virtual learning, IT leaders at higher education institutions are now forecasting a future heavily influenced by the cloud—a trend that will promote improved operational efficiency as well as cost and time savings, new insights, and enhanced experiences.
Schools are expanding the benefits delivered by their network by establishing solutions that go beyond traditional applications to address the unique challenges higher education institutions face.

You need to ensure you are getting the most out of your budget and team as you modernize legacy infrastructures, improve physical and cybersecurity, and expand real-time services and bandwidth.
Almost 59% of IT departments cited lack of budget as their primary challenge in an eRepublic study, while 20% cited insufficient staff.

Other major concerns included communication issues, multiple devices (such as smartphones, tablets, gaming systems, and laptops), and a high volume of support tickets.

**University or college IT team’s primary pain points**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of budget</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of skilled staff</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication issues</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many tickets</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many devices on the system</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher enrollment than expected</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey by e.Republic The Center for Digital Education
More than 20% of survey respondents are interested in moving to the cloud to address these concerns.

By choosing a cloud-native platform that uses open APIs, your team will have a flexible, future-friendly solution that can adapt to meet prevailing needs. A cloud platform also liberates you from mundane tasks like patching software so your team can focus on impactful, visible projects such as Wi-Fi 6 deployments or learning management system (LMS) upgrades.
Cloud benefits

01
Scalability and agility that adapts as needs change.

02
Pay only for what you need using opex, not capex, funds.

03
Reduced maintenance, as on-site staff is no longer responsible for most server and network upkeep.

04
Staffing savings, as the CIO does not have to recruit and retain hard-to-find IT professionals.

05
Focused expertise on high-value initiatives across the campus, as internal technology teams address wish-list items for staff, students, and professors.
You can also leverage cloud networks for super-charged physical and cybersecurity.

Smart Cameras allow physical security professionals to rapidly review footage. These cameras also include analytics that give insight into campus traffic and help with contact tracing.

Cisco Meraki MV smart cameras enable your team to securely monitor and manage camera deployments in the cloud, from anywhere. Meraki smart cameras don’t require standalone video management software or network video recorders (NVRs). The cloud-augmented edge architecture stores footage on the camera, not the cloud, to ensure critical network activities get the bandwidth they need, and Meraki management is encrypted by default.
University networks are a common target for security threats—more than half of all education institutions suffered breaches in 2020. Your team must know who is on the network and which devices and applications they are using. To keep the network properly protected, patch against new security vulnerabilities and partition access by user group, e.g. faculty, students, visitors.

Open tickets about network performance have decreased by more than 90% since Community College of Denver (CCD) switched to Meraki access points and switches. CCD also deployed two Meraki MX security and SD-WAN appliances on several isolated networks to provide extra safeguards for assets like its HVAC, gas-line monitoring, and credit card processing systems, and it prioritized VoIP traffic to ensure staff members had appropriate bandwidth for critical conversations.
While every school is unique, many face similar challenges.

The most pressing wireless network security concerns, in order, are:

1. Email security
2. Mobile device security
3. Antivirus and anti-malware software
4. Data loss prevention
5. Web security
6. Access control
7. Firewalls
8. Application security

Survey by e.Republic The Center for Digital Education
Securing learning environments

By transitioning to the cloud and enabling your team to slash the time spent updating existing software to safeguard the network, you can create a more agile infrastructure, higher-performance networks, and enhanced experiences for faculty, administrators, students, and guests.
Discover how Meraki empowers your team to deliver an uplifting experience fueled by the cloud.