



United Nations International School of Hanoi

- A United Nations International School deploying Meraki for 1,100+ students
- Meraki MR access points and MS switches enabling greater visibility and insight
- Network management via web dashboard allows seamless troubleshooting for IT team



The United Nations International School of Hanoi (UNIS Hanoi) is a co-educational English-language day school and the first international school established in Vietnam. Being one of the United Nations international schools in the world, UNIS Hanoi follows the ideals and principles of the United Nations in action every day and is committed to inspiring and equipping young people to build a better world.

With more than 1,100 students enrolled each year, and over 300 staff members, Adam Archer, Senior Manager of IT, and his team support the school’s network to provide their students with the best educational experience for their young global citizens. With their relationship with the United Nations at its core, UNIS Hanoi strives to provide an exceptional learning community and to assist that, Archer and his team are tasked with providing seamless and market-leading technology for students and staff.

ORIGINAL NETWORKING CHALLENGES

- With a large and distributed campus at UNIS Hanoi, the IT team was challenged to provide a consistent and reliable network throughout the campus. Devices needed to be connected to the network everywhere across the campus -- no matter where students or staff went on campus. The existing network was unreliable due to aging technology, creating challenges to resolve issues when they arose.
- Prior to Meraki, their network infrastructure consisted of a mixture of switch models, running different configuration and firmware, which made it extremely difficult for the IT team to provide uniform support between all the non-uniform hardware. With the lack of network visibility and a large number of user devices being connected, troubleshooting IT issues was difficult and time-consuming.
- Archer wanted the network to follow the school’s vision of using next-generation technology. They saw Meraki as a potential partner in their journey to the cloud.

WHY CISCO MERAKI?

- When Archer and his team saw the simplicity of the web-based Meraki dashboard, they knew the ease of management would help their school’s distributed network.
- Increased visibility was a big reason his team chose Meraki “We now have greater insight if someone is having a problem with their particular device — We are able to pinpoint where that person is, what their signal strength is, which access point they are connected to, and why they might be having that problem. This level of visibility is something that we did not have access to before Meraki,” said Archer.
- With the number of students, buildings, and devices continuing to increase, the school wanted to minimize the need for on-site IT staff while maximizing the ability to deploy new parts of their network infrastructure faster.

THE DEPLOYMENT

- UNIS Hanoi implemented 130+ Meraki MR42, MR52, and MR74 Wave 2 802.11ac access points throughout the campus, both in classrooms as well as on outdoor sports fields, to allow students to access the network no matter where they are on campus.
- The school also deployed 20+ MS225 and MS425 switches to replace their legacy switches. Using the port scheduling and topology features has allowed the IT team to have granular control and visibility into their network. They have also taken advantage of the 10 GbE uplink to provide students and staff with faster download speeds.
- The deployment was faster and easier than Archer expected. “Some of the traditionally challenging aspects of deployment such as configuring and troubleshooting took minimal time thanks to the ease of configuration with the web-based Meraki dashboard,” Archer said. He added that “the configuration of Meraki was the easy part,” and the most time-consuming part was the physical aspects of the deployment, such as removing the old access points, physically installation of the access points, and unplugging cables from the old equipment.

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– Adam Archer, Senior Manager of IT

- For the configuration, the IT team took advantage of the ability to pre-stage in the dashboard while their Meraki access points and switches were in transit. “We were able to pre-configure our Meraki access points and switches before they even arrived. This saved us a lot of time and made the deployment process much simpler,” Archer said.
- The MR74 outdoor access points provided an easy deployment experience for the UNIS Hanoi IT team. To reach the sidelines of the outdoor sports field, all the UNIS Hanoi IT team needed to do was install them on the side of one of the buildings, thanks to the multi-user 2x2 multiple input, multiple output (MU-MIMO) technology of the MR74. To cover the rest of the field, UNIS Hanoi plans to install more Meraki outdoor access points on the other side of the field.

THE RESULTS

- Over 1,500 users and 3,000 devices access the school’s network each week using laptops, tablets, desktops, and smartphones with a dramatically reduced number of network issues. With Meraki, the UNIS Hanoi IT team is able to offer a reliable network that works anywhere on campus, allowing students and staff to choose the best platform for their individual needs.
- UNIS Hanoi uses the Meraki dashboard to throttle bandwidth and create group policies for the devices on the network to ensure optimal bandwidth allocation and great user experiences for students and staff alike.
- New features are automatically downloaded and applied to all of their access points and switches at no additional cost, providing UNIS Hanoi with a future-proof solution.
- The 24/7 support that Meraki provides has been useful for the IT team. Archer mentioned that “support with Meraki is fast, you can get someone right away, and replacement equipment is sent without delay” and added that “in our time zone you often wait 1-2 weeks to be assigned someone who can help.”