Lingnan University's Smart Campus Runs on 100% IT Visibility

Key Challenges

Lingnan University's distributed IT environment supports over 10,000 users across its campus, and it needed to maintain high uptime and security for operations.

Key Results

By centralizing operations across data analytics and security, Lingnan University has achieved 100% infrastructure visibility and improved its digital resilience.

Lingnan 嶺 南 大 學
University 香港 Hong Kong

Industry: Higher Education

Solutions: IT, Security

Products: Splunk Cloud, Splunk Enterprise, Splunk SOAR

Cultivating a smart campus with digital-age innovation

Since its founding in 1888, Lingnan University has received international recognition for its unwavering commitment to quality, whole-person education. As a renowned research university that combines the best of Chinese and Western liberal arts traditions, it aspires to build a smart campus and use innovative technologies.

The Infrastructure Services Section (ISS) of Lingnan's Information Technology Services Centre (ITSC) oversees the entire university's IT infrastructure. A sixteen-strong team maintains a secure, reliable, and scalable IT environment for every student, faculty, and administrator on campus. However, its heterogeneous computing environment — a complex mix of on-premises systems, hybrid clouds, and microservices — presented a major challenge.

Moreover, as data volume increased, server farms also grew in size. This placed an extra burden on system administration, IT resources, lifecycle management, and manpower. As a result, the ISS team became increasingly siloed, as it had to split members up to monitor different parts of the distributed IT environment. This made collaborative problem-solving across multiple vendors and management systems nearly impossible. The university needed a solution to fully centralize, automate, and facilitate IT management — and the ISS team found the answer by adopting Splunk Cloud, Splunk Enterprise, and Splunk Security, Orchestration, Automation, and Response (SOAR).

Outcomes

Increased efficiency for all IT operations

100% infrastructure visibility

100% increase in monitorable log types

Supporting 10,000 users with one centralized dashboard

With Splunk, Lingnan University gains data-powered, real-time visibility into the health status of all IT servers through a single pane of glass for the first time in its history. As a result, the ISS team no longer needs to make multiple efforts to troubleshoot across disparate systems. Now, it can efficiently handle all IT administrative tasks through a unified platform and proactively address security problems before they become significant issues.

Splunk Enterprise allows Lingnan University to consolidate operation dashboards from various system consoles into one and streamline monitoring interfaces. Splunk SOAR automates alert monitoring, incident investigation, and response. It also prioritizes incident response based on risk and business impact. The time saved can be reinvested in other tasks to deliver greater value to ITSC and the university.

Who could have imagined that 16 people could thoroughly monitor the entire IT infrastructure and offer a stable, reliable, and secure computing experience to over 10,000 teachers, students, and staff — all through a single dashboard?

Mitigating cloud complexity with unprecedented digital resilience

Migrating to Splunk Cloud was another critical move. "Splunk Cloud delivers benefits of Splunk Enterprise on an as-a-service basis that minimizes administrative overhead," says Dr. Louisa Lam, chief information officer and university librarian at Lingnan University. "By doing this, it gives us the peace of mind we have never had when using the on-premises model, so that we no longer have to worry about whether we had enough IT resources and capacity to cope with data growth."

Lingnan University has also used Splunk to automate threat hunting and successfully increased the accuracy to beyond 80%. The ISS team now enjoys full automated visibility into IT operations. This helps minimize disruptions, protect digital assets, ensure continuous operations, and boost digital resilience, which is of top importance to Lingnan University's smart campus development. With actionable insights from historical data, Splunk helps the institution identify usage trends, speed up root cause analysis, and foresee risks and needs. The university can now take early steps on system planning and configuration while generating reports and predictive alerts to ensure system availability.

Shaping a sustainable future with pioneering technologies

Splunk gives Lingnan University the scalability to build effective IT operations, which creates a stronger foundation for future growth. Dr. Lam takes log management as an example. "The previous manual-based model did not allow us to focus on all logs simultaneously, with priority going to on-premises and alert logs. With proactive visibility through Splunk, we can handle double the types of logs."

With Splunk, Lingnan can provide a better learning environment for students and educators. The ISS team appreciates Splunk's customer-centric team members, who proactively review use cases and offer optimal advice on areas where Splunk can be applied. Moving forward, Lingnan University will continue to explore using AI and machine learning to get further predictive insights from the Splunk platform. Splunk will keep playing a key role in the university's future IT roadmap to meet multifaceted data analytical demands and integrate cutting-edge technology as a leading university in Asia.

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Splunk keeps us resilient in our digital lives and helps us embrace innovation to create a sustainable smart campus."

Dr. Louisa Lam, Chief Information Officer & University Librarian, Lingnan University

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