



CASE STUDY

Glastonbury Public Schools

Atlantic architects a robust wireless LAN to support the district's one-to-one initiative and dynamic learning environment using Apple TVs and iPads.

ABOUT ATLANTIC


Atlantic provides superior wireless and wired network deployments. We focus on commercial and educational WiFi, and the supporting LAN / WAN infrastructures. We've deployed many, many thousands of access points in demanding wide-area wireless networks. We've enhanced terrestrial networks, bringing layer-3 resiliency and 10 Gbit/s service to existing deployments at affordable costs. We've provided point-to-point links and wireless infrastructure to municipalities. Atlantic has installations spanning the US, and into Canada and Mexico. We have a stellar reputation. Call us first.

Glastonbury Public Schools comprises nine schools, including one high school, one middle school (7th and 8th grades), a 6th-grade school and six elementary schools (kindergarten through 5th grades). There are more than 6,500 students in the district.

A few years ago the district launched an initiative to provide end-to-end wireless connectivity across all nine schools. The district's IT team had chosen Aruba as the manufacturer for the project. The district also recognized the need for an integration partner to assist with the implementation. Based upon recommendations from other districts in the area Glastonbury selected Atlantic Computing Technology Corp. as their integration partner.

"We were honing in on the Aruba hardware and, after talking with some other school districts in the area, found that Atlantic came highly recommended," said Chris Macca, Coordinator of Instructional Computing, Glastonbury Public Schools. "We reached out to Atlantic, had them come in, and sat down and talked with them about the equipment and how they would help us deploy it."

Finding the right integrator was critical to the success of the initiative. The district's IT staff did not have the expertise to design the Wi-Fi infrastructure, and needed experi-



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enced engineers who could architect a solution that would meet the district’s needs and objectives.

“At best we were kind of hobbyists with Wi-Fi,” Macca said. “We’d place access points here and there, then go back after the fact and move the hardware around to address issues as they arose. Atlantic had the expertise to look at our school maps, walk through the buildings themselves, and design a Wi-Fi network that would be useful today and into the future.

“We interviewed a couple of other integrators and in the end felt that Atlantic had the most expertise, the best understanding and the most demonstrable experience to help our school district achieve our 21st-century learning initiatives.”

Critical Expertise

The Atlantic team quickly proved themselves as the initiative got under way. The engineers developed a solid design, and made sound recommendations regarding the placement of access points.

“No matter the answer we got from Atlantic, it was right on. They said, ‘This is the way we’ll lay out the access points. This is where we think you’ll get best coverage.’ And those recommendations proved to be true. Now, thankfully, we don’t have to go back,” said Macca.

That level of expertise was especially important when it came time to deploy Wi-Fi in Glastonbury High School. The district was rolling out a one-to-one initiative in the high school. The WLAN infrastructure had to be robust enough to support the load.

“We have over 2,000 students at our high school, and had to make sure that the Wi-Fi network would be able to handle that many users and that much traffic, and be resilient and reliable. Having Atlantic come in and guide us through the process and advise us on how to do it was absolutely critical,” Macca said.

WLAN implementations commonly come with two sets of challenges — first, getting the WLAN design right and, second, dealing with the devices connecting to the network. Atlantic not only designed the infrastructure but helped Macca and his team work through device-related issues.

“We were using iPads for one-to-one, and trying to integrate Apple TVs for wireless projection in the classroom. We brought

in the Apple hardware, put it on the network, and realized we were getting instability,” said Macca. “Atlantic helped us determine what was causing the issues and what the solution was. Without their assistance, I would have been in the water without a paddle.”

Bringing It All Together

Part of the difficulty in troubleshooting issues with devices is getting the various vendors to acknowledge the root cause of the problem. All too often it can be a frustrating exercise in finger-pointing. Atlantic helped overcome those obstacles.

“Atlantic was crucial — they handled all the heavy questions,” Macca said. “At one point we had an Apple systems engineer come in in tandem with an Aruba engineer. Atlantic helped us run through the issues that we were seeing and facilitated collaboration between the two vendors to help make sure the Wi-Fi network would be reliable.”

Glastonbury Public Schools is using Aruba AirGroup, an integrated, network-based solution that supports devices running Apple’s AirPlay streaming content platform and AirPrint mobile printing feature. AirGroup provides policy-based management capabilities that maximize Wi-Fi bandwidth, and enables the district’s teachers to select the nearest Apple TVs for wireless projection.

In the end, once the decision was made to move forward with Aruba technology, choosing Atlantic was the icing on the cake. While the district’s Wi-Fi implementation is nearly complete, the Atlantic team continues to provide ongoing support.

“We keep them on call,” said Macca. “They are more than happy to respond to any email or come out and assist us. They are also over-the-top helpful when it comes time to renew our maintenance contracts, going through the painstaking effort of checking which devices we bought and when. They help us make sure that support for all of our devices gets renewed at the cost that we should be paying.

“The school districts in our area talk to each other. We share tips and tricks. And if we have a vendor we are really happy with, we tell each other. I’ve talked to a couple of the school districts around us and said, ‘Guys, you have to work with Atlantic. Move over to Atlantic. Get them in-house.’”

