

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY:

BLOOMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS | BLOOMINGTON, IL

THREE SIMPLE WAYS ONE DISTRICT IS PROTECTING STUDENTS AND THEIR DATA

Safeguarding student data is a primary responsibility for today's school districts. Just one moment's lapse in data security can result in a host of serious consequences for students: **compromised safety, stolen identity, a ruined credit score, and more.**

Because data breaches can have costly impacts for students well into adulthood, many states are supplementing the national Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) with robust local privacy laws. Bloomington Public Schools (BPS), a district serving approximately 6,000 students in rural Illinois, is integrating data analytics tools to help meet the standards of Illinois's new Student Online Personal Protection Act (SOPPA).

Achieving SOPPA Compliance

As Jim Peterson, Technology Director for BPS, explains below, the district uses CatchOn, an expansive data analytics tool, to ensure his students' safety and to promote effective instruction. He is now leveraging CatchOn to prepare his district for full SOPPA-compliance in these three ways.

Data Security Tip 1: Find out what apps your school district is actually using

When districts deploy CatchOn, administrators are immediately surprised to see the vast amount and types of apps being used: unapproved or unknown apps used widely, expensive apps going neglected, and effective apps used sparingly.

BPS immediately discovered some inefficiencies and potential threats when they first deployed CatchOn. **"We had six or seven quiz applications in use," explained Mr. Peterson. "That's highly inefficient. Worse, educators might be logging in, downloading their class lists, and uploading in many systems without anybody's knowledge. It's scary stuff. Knowing what apps students are using is a good first step from a privacy perspective."**



Data Security Tip 2: Use CatchOn to foster a security dialogue with teachers

Mr. Peterson has found that much of Bloomington’s app sprawl has resulted from his teachers’ eagerness to get new, effective apps to students. In order to foster this practice without jeopardizing student data security, Mr. Peterson created a forum where teachers could submit apps they would like to use. **“We have to get teachers what they want when they want it, but we also have to protect our kids,”** he said. **“So now we have a committee that meets every month to evaluate apps from curriculum, privacy, and technology perspectives.”** Thanks to this process, BPS has not only been able to protect its students, but also to disseminate the most effective apps districtwide.

Recently, Mr. Peterson has improved this dialogue with teachers by using CatchOn. Because the forum is now linked to CatchOn, teachers can see what apps the district has already approved for use when they nominate a new one for approval. **“CatchOn doesn’t just share all the apps approved in our district,”** explained Mr. Peterson. **“The tool also shows how teachers can best roll out and begin using each app, while showing parents what apps we’re actually using. CatchOn has really helped us.”**

Data Security Tip 3: Include other stakeholders in your security dialogue

As districts nationwide are navigating security challenges, they’re finding ways of helping each other do so successfully. Mr. Peterson has been using CatchOn to expedite BPS’s process of evaluating new apps. **“CatchOn lets us see what other apps districts are tracking and which ones they have approved,”** he said. **“Plus, CatchOn includes each app’s licensing agreement, which makes it easier to monitor those kinds of things.”**

Mr. Peterson and his team also use CatchOn to communicate critical data privacy information to parents. CatchOn makes it easier for districts to comply with emerging legislation that requires public disclosure of all data policies and data breaches. To do so, districts simply need to upload to CatchOn a document detailing the breach and then notify parents of the posting. In these ways, CatchOn empowers different members of Bloomington’s community to contribute to student success.

Whatever your district’s current regulatory landscape, following these three simple steps can help you protect students while boosting education results.

To see a quick demo of how CatchOn can help you safeguard your student data, click here.



CONTACT US TODAY!

For more information about CatchOn, please contact info@catchon.com.

ABOUT CATCHON

CatchOn is a user-friendly data analytics tool that compiles real-time data on every device, enabling school districts to make data-informed decisions about the apps and online tools their educators and students are using. In 2018, CatchOn joined forces with ENA, a leading provider of comprehensive technology solutions to education institutions and libraries across the nation. Collectively, CatchOn and ENA leverage their respective resources and expertise to deliver critical services and solutions that help school districts produce positive outcomes in the communities they serve.

