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CASE STUDY

Fortinet Supports the Andrea Bocelli Foundation's Mission to Empower Future Generations through Secure Digital Learning

The Andrea Bocelli Foundation (ABF) was founded in 2011 to empower people and communities in poverty, illiteracy, and distress resulting from illness and social exclusion. The foundation achieves this by promoting and supporting projects across Italy and abroad that help individuals overcome these barriers, providing opportunities for more young people to reach their full potential.

Since 2011, ABF has raised over 60 million euros, which has led to the construction of 10 schools in Italy and Haiti and provided over 3,600 students with access to world-class education. Additional ABF-initiated welfare projects now provide access to drinking water and primary medical care for over 400,000 people living in remote and impoverished areas of Haiti. The Foundation also creates and promotes educational projects that use music as a tool for social inclusion and talent development, all in line with Goal 4.7 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

The Role of Technology in Empowering People and Driving Social Progress
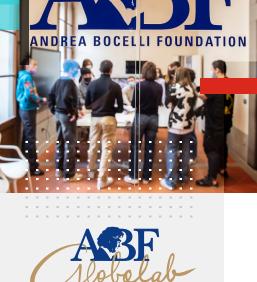
The philosophy underpinning all of ABF's work is to build a better future for everyone by sharing experience, resources, and expertise to create an environment that empowers and enables future generations—especially those less fortunate. As that future becomes increasingly digital, technology is inevitably playing an ever-greater role in such work.

Because of this, a vital element of every ABF project is the creation of a secure digital infrastructure upon which everything else relies. ABF was keen to find a technology partner who shared their same core values and underlying philosophy—a partner committed to making the world a safer and more sustainable place and one for whom social responsibility forms an integral part of its business. The partner ultimately chosen was Fortinet.

"Once we began discussing our various projects and their requirements," explains Silvia Gualdani, CFO and deputy director, Andrea Bocelli Foundation, "it was immediately apparent that the Fortinet team not only understood what we were trying to achieve but also shared our vision of creating a better and safer digital future."

With this partnership, the Andrea Bocelli Foundation aims to build and strengthen three primary mid- and long-term objectives.

The first is to integrate and improve the educational spaces created by ABF, making them not only beautiful and functional, but also safe places in terms of physical infrastructure and digital environment. This is being achieved by implementing

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Details

Customer: Andrea Bocelli Foundation

Industry: Non-profit foundation

Location: Italy

Business Impact

- Created secure, flexible, high-performance campus LANs

- Enabled simplified remote management of the complete digital learning environment

- Reduced risk by helping to build a cyber-aware culture through the Fortinet Security Awareness and Training Service program

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Fortinet solutions designed for the security, protection, and education of today's and tomorrow's citizens (ABF Educational Hub of Sforzacosta).

The second is to build and develop a culture of awareness and digital security in young people to ensure a safe environment where they can move and grow in compliance with a pact of trust, sharing, and relationships (ABF GlobaLab in San Firenze). To help meet this objective, Fortinet has given ABF pupils access to its Security Awareness and Training Service and NSE Fundamentals training, allowing them to develop critical cybersecurity skills.

The final objective is for ABF to continue marking a path of innovation and inspiration that can act as a stimulus for other third-sector entities by creating a culture of safety, as has already been done for things like compliance and ESG. The aim is to encourage and support more ETS toward digitalizing processes and flow management.

School Reconstruction in the Aftermath of the 2016 Earthquake

Following the devastating 6.2-magnitude earthquake that struck central Italy in 2016, the ABF began an educational recovery project in Sforzacosta, in the municipality of Macerata. The ABF 0-11 Educational Hub was developed in multiple stages, including the reconstruction of a new kindergarten and the redesigning of primary school classrooms with music, art, and technology workshops.

Since these new facilities were equipped with the latest digital learning tools and resources, ABF turned to Fortinet to discuss how best to create a secure and flexible digital environment for the students to explore their potential. The goal was not just to develop the usual "hard skills" traditionally associated with education but also—through the intervention of trained psychologists—"soft skills" such as communication, teamwork, adaptability, and leadership.

This called for a secure, high-performance infrastructure that was both flexible and scalable since, as a brand-new facility, the exact requirements for data throughput, network topology, and access technology would likely evolve over the coming years.

The Preschool Hub, which covers an area of 600 m^2, opened in January 2024 and has a capacity of around 70 children across two kindergarten sections and one daycare section.

These new facilities are also expected to have a positive long-term impact on the local economy because, in addition to their use during school hours, they will be available for extracurricular activities after school and during the summer period, encouraging a continual flow of people (families, educational staff, donors, masterclass students, and teachers), thereby maximizing overall value to the community.

ABF GlobaLAB Project

The ABF GlobaLAB is an empowerment program for young people aged 16 to 25. It is based on the profound link between the quality of individual existence and the opportunities for relationship building, experimentation, research, and nurturing talent and intelligence.

To create the optimal conditions for this to occur, ABF, with the support of the Florence City Council, began a complex restoration project to transform the San Firenze complex, with its majestic facade and interiors, into a modern digital learning environment.

Supporting the educational activities (both physical and virtual) planned for this space required flexible, high-speed multimedia data communications and networking that could be deployed unobtrusively within this unique 16th-century building. It also needed to include simple management for minimal disruption to the students, teachers, and other collaborators. It was also crucial that this infrastructure could scale and adapt as the project evolves and expands over time.

Solutions
- FortiGate Next-Generation Firewall
- FortiSwitch
- FortiAP
- FortiPhish

Service
- Fortinet Security Awareness and Training Service

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Silvia Gualdani
CFO and Deputy Director
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Fortinet technologies addressed each of these issues. "The solution's ability to enforce a unified security policy is a huge advantage for the ABF GlobaLAB project," explains Gualdani.

Building a Cyber-Aware Culture

ABF also understood that maximizing online safety—especially for their younger, more vulnerable students—would require more than just technology. Effective digital security also needs to encompass people and processes. So, in addition to the Fortinet LAN solution, ABF chose to implement the Fortinet Security Awareness and Training Service.

The Fortinet Security Awareness and Training Service is a SaaS-based offering that provides awareness training on the latest cybersecurity threats. By helping students and other ABF collaborators recognize and avoid falling victim to common cyberattack vectors such as phishing and drive-by downloads, ABF is building a cyber-aware culture that will significantly reduce the risk of a severe security breach.

Over a third of all successful security breaches involve phishing, so it was decided that the awareness training should also include an ability to test students against real-world phishing techniques. Informed by Fortinet's elite cybersecurity threat intelligence and research organization, FortiGuard Labs, these Fortinet solutions also help organizations and users recognize, avoid, and report email-based cyberthreats, including phishing, impersonation, business email compromise, and ransomware.

"Driving effective social change is a gradual process with many varied challenges along the way," reflects Gualdani. "But through our partnership with Fortinet, we know that our cybersecurity challenges are now in the safest possible hands."

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