

Private School Simplifies SSO and Reduces Parent Login Problems

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Matthew Russell

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGER, THE GLENNIE SCHOOL

Located in Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia, The Glennie School has been in operation since 1908. Glennie is known for outstanding facilities, education, and pastoral care programs for girls from Kindergarten to Year 12. The school needed a solution for providing seamless single sign-on (SSO) to the students, staff, and parents.

CHALLENGE

Varying SSO Standards

When Glennie began its search for an identity and access management (IAM) solution, they recognized the need to streamline the user experience for their 2,000 users on multiple apps. Matthew Russell, Information Technology Manager at Glennie, explains, “The IT department transitioned an 8-year investment in Microsoft SharePoint to Google Sites and Google Drive, aiming to consolidate and simplify the user and management experience. The goal was to create a single web portal with a maximum of three clicks from that landing page for the user to reach the information they were seeking. Due to the major navigation overhaul, the school faced SSO challenges.”

“Many products offer different SSO standards, from SAML to OAuth, to many others in between. Some products do not even support a standard,” continues Russell.



INDUSTRY

K-12 Education



USERS

2,000 staff, students and parents



TOP CLOUD APPS

Office 365

Google Apps



CHALLENGE

Manage varying SSO standards across apps

Simplify logins for parents, students, and staff



SOLUTION

Custom SSO connectors and easier parent login with OneLogin browser extension and launch app link features



RESULTS

Accelerated and simplified access to broad range of apps from web portal

Reduced support calls from parents unable to login to school resources

“Permission Denied” Errors for Parents

Another challenge was simplifying parent logins. Parents are integrally involved in the school’s system for correspondence, calendars and online permission forms, and were already using Google Apps for this. However, since many parents also had personal accounts, they often could not access links and called Glennie for support. Russell explains, “When the school sent out links to these Google resources, often parents would receive a ‘permission denied’ error as their browser was already signed in as their personal Gmail user account, not the school one.”

SOLUTION

The school reviewed several IAM providers as the deadline for their transition grew closer. Glennie selected OneLogin as the best match for the school’s specific set of needs, with features such as OneLogin’s browser extension and launch app links to simplify the user experience.

Browser Extension to Create Custom SSO Connectors

The OneLogin browser extension helped Glennie overcome the problems caused by the varying SSO standards of their most commonly used apps. Russell says, “That extension allowed us to create custom SSO connectors for subscription websites that only offer legacy forms-based authentication.”

The simple sign-on process also helps their youngest users, who are just learning to read and write. “Our Junior School, in particular, subscribes and uses many such online resources. This allowed us to simplify the number of usernames and passwords for our Kindergarten and Year 1 students. That was important as they are only beginning to learn how to read and write, let alone remember passwords as well,” adds Russell.

Launch App Links

OneLogin also solved the parent login issues the school had been facing. “With OneLogin launch app links, we now easily create custom links for the school’s Google Apps resources, which automatically sign the parent out of their personal account in the browser and sign them in with their school credentials. This all happens without affecting the parent’s saved browser credentials,” says Russell. “Eliminating support calls we used to get from parents unable to access email links more than compensates for the time spent creating a OneLogin launch link for each app parents use.”

Assuming Users

One feature Glennie has found especially useful is Assuming Users. This OneLogin feature allows authorized IT staff to act as the user and diagnose improper configurations and troubleshoot issues. Russell

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explains, “We particularly like that the process requires the IT staff member to give a documented reason before assuming the user, and this information is able to be reported on for accountability. Consequently, we also like that we no longer need to request the user’s password to do this task, which allows the user to keep their password secure and secret.”

RESULTS

“Since we switched to OneLogin, adoption and use have grown dramatically. The login process for our users is significantly more seamless and error proof,” Russell reports. Here are some of the results:

- Smoother parental login process results in fewer support calls from parents.
- Students, parents, and staff use learning portal and intranet, authenticated using OneLogin SAML authorization.
- Different user groups see tailored app icons that link to the resources and information specific to their group.
- 70 individual apps are configured for their users via OneLogin. Apps include Microsoft Office 365, Google Apps, SEQTA, School Online Booking System (SOBS), Parent Teacher Online (PTO), Wheelers ePlatform, Education Perfect, and Mathletics.

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Timely and thorough customer support helped Glennie achieve the above results. Australian organizations face inherent challenges regarding time zones and customer service availability. So the school established a business arrangement with OneLogin’s authorized Australian distributor, Cloud Distribution. Russell explains, “The relationship with the distributor has been a good move, as we now have access to support from OneLogin directly, who work predominantly on the US time zone, and our local timezone distributor.”

OneLogin proved to be the right choice for Glennie. Russell says, “If a school was looking to outsource identity management to a provider, we would definitely recommend OneLogin based on our experience.”

About OneLogin, Inc

OneLogin brings speed and integrity to the modern enterprise with an award-winning SSO and identity management platform. Our portfolio of solutions secure connections across all users, all devices, and every application, helping enterprises drive new levels of business integrity and operational velocity across their entire app portfolios. The choice for innovators of all sizes such as Condé Nast, Pinterest and Steelcase, OneLogin manages and secures millions of identities around the globe.