



# A Cybersecurity Mesh Speeds Digital Transformation

A security fabric of complementary tools provides protection for distributed IT environments, improves efficiencies and prepares campuses for the challenges ahead.



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**T**HE EVOLVING NATURE OF IT creates new cybersecurity challenges for colleges and universities. The digital surface is increasing rapidly, driven in part by the pandemic and complicated by the myriad cyber attacks of today's world. Institutions have been deeply involved in remote learning for the past couple years, and online modalities are not going away.

Institutions now see their data crossing commercial transports and living within employee and student home networks. That adds complexity to the infrastructure and increases opportunities for cyber adversaries to attack. A powerful way to protect that distributed IT environment is by adopting a cybersecurity mesh architecture.

## The Benefits of a Mesh Approach

Research firm Gartner defines a cybersecurity mesh as a “flexible, composable architecture that integrates widely distributed and disparate security services” – in other words, it enables institutions to leverage a suite of complementary tools. A mesh architecture creates efficiency and greater coverage across the digital surface, while enabling the IT team to understand what's happening on its network and better prepare for the next cybersecurity event. This concept can also reduce the number of point security solutions and products.

To make the business case for taking that approach, focus on demonstrating return on investment. A mesh architecture reduces costs

because it consolidates tools and services while simplifying digital transitions. The mesh components will enable standardized training and raise the bar on knowledge transfer across the distributed IT environment.

In addition, a mesh environment will make it easier to comply with the federal government's latest Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification. Those standards and certifications apply to federal contractors, and they're expected to expand to institutions that conduct federally funded research. In fact, adhering to CMMC can give institutions a roadmap to follow in developing their cybersecurity mesh.

## Driving Security with Efficiency

Through 2024, analytics will drive enhancements in digital workplace infrastructure and processes, and automated mediation capabilities will refocus 30% or more of all IT operations. Therefore, the more progress an institution makes on digital transformation in 2022, the more efficient it will be in 2024.

Fortinet has offered our Security Fabric for 10 years, and it closely mimics the cybersecurity mesh approach that Gartner recommends. Our goal is to make digital acceleration possible through improved operational efficiency and security.

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