



Henrico County Public Schools Block MySpace With Marshal8e6's R3000 Internet Filter

Client:

Henrico County Public Schools

Web Site:

www.henrico.k12.va.us

Number of Users:

45,000

Requirements:

Web Filtering

Solutions:

R3000 Internet Filter

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Jason Cope,
System Administrator,
Henrico County Public Schools

Profile

Henrico County Public Schools has over 45,000 users, most of them being students. Internet use is crucial to the school's educational curriculum, as students are encouraged to further their education with the Internet, both at school and at home.

Challenge

Like any other educational institution, Henrico was concerned with reducing inappropriate Web surfing, exposure to legal liability due to inappropriate Web surfing and security risks such as spyware, phishing, and other malware.

However, all these problems didn't compare to the gigantic headache Myspace.com presented for school IT Administrators and staff at Henrico. As Jason Cope, System Administrator, recounts, “It exploded overnight. Suddenly everyone was trying to use it and there was a plethora of hits to multiple points of entry for the site.” This increased traffic load was seriously degrading the school's Internet access to educational applications. Through Myspace, students have unlimited access to email, Instant Messenger (IM), blogs, and photo galleries.

Myspace isn't just an irritant for school IT staff and teachers who have to constantly check that students aren't wasting school time surfing the site and chatting with friends. Myspace is a Pandora's box of trouble for school staff. Not only do sexual predators lurk on that site and other youth-based online communities in search of children, but much of the site's content goes against the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), which mandates that federally funded schools filter the Internet to protect children from online predators, pornography, hate, and other unacceptable content.

Henrico needed a filtering solution that understood the educational space: “We have had vendors who made promises as to what their products can do. A lot of times they don't know what they are getting into because they judge performance by corporate standards. We needed a vendor that understood education's needs,” says Mr Cope.

Solutions

Henrico's IT staff found that Marshal8e6's R3000 Internet Filter provided the best solution for its specific Education needs. The R3000 provides a scalable, high-speed filtering solution that integrates easily into any existing network infrastructure. Organized as a stand-alone appliance, the R3000 frees networks of bottlenecks and downtime. Without the constant requirement to manage filtering, IT staff can focus on mission critical projects, making their time more productive and cost effective.

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Key product features for education include:

- Blocks URLs, FTP, IM, P2P, Newsgroups, Spyware and other emerging threats
- Comprehensive 90+ category database enhanced by Marshal8e6’s Customer Feedback Module
- “X-Strikes” blocking sets limits on students attempting to access “inappropriate sites”
- Google and Yahoo SafeSearch Enforcement block access to inappropriate content within the Google/Yahoo search engines, including images
- Real-time Probes allow administrators to monitor user Web activity as it occurs
- Filters file downloads by type/extension—stops executables, music, video and broadband radio to help conserve network bandwidth

Mr Cope found the R3000’s Customer Feedback Module (CFM) especially useful in his battle against Myspace. The CFM Auto Learning Feature lets the most frequently visited non-categorized URLs in the R3000’s filter log be footprinted to Marshal8e6 on a daily basis. The selected URLs collected by Marshal8e6 are reviewed and added to its standard library categories, as appropriate, so they can be blocked. “We plugged in the ‘Myspace’ keyword filter and other tell tale URL keywords associated with Myspace and locked them out. CFM helps to categorize any popular backdoors and running reports on popular hits also get these backdoors locked,” says Mr Cope.

Henrico also uses the Enterprise Reporter 3.0 in conjunction with the R3000. The only stand-alone appliance that reports on students’ Web activities, the ER is optimized to generate fast, detailed, and customizable reports. Mr Cope states, “The ER gives much more informed reporting than any other product we’ve used. It keeps up with Internet demands for performance and scalability with new options tailored to make our lives easier.”

In addition, the IT staff found the Graphical User Interface (GUI) for both products to allow ease of use compared to other products. “The GUI allows flexibility in the potential of how it can be used to work in a school environment, which usually pushes the boundaries of our products.

Result

“Marshal8e6 has overall better preparedness to handle the challenge of our users and a proven track record to commitment to make the product work, even if it means changing the product to address Henrico’s specific needs,” says Mr Cope. And the one stop support Marshal8e6 offers puts the cherry on the cake: “The support is as valuable as the product itself,” Mr Cope says. “Most people who deal with IT will agree that without support your product becomes a lot less valuable and in some cases no value at all. Marshal8e6 never gives you the run-around.”

About Marshal8e6

Marshal8e6 is a global provider of Secure Internet Gateway products for organizations of all sizes. Marshal8e6 is the only security company capable of delivering comprehensive content security across multiple delivery platforms, including software, appliances and Software-as-a-service (SaaS). The company’s complete security portfolio delivers the tools necessary to manage and secure email, Web and the endpoint as well as protect against data leakage. Today, more than 16 million end users in more than 20,000 companies in 96 countries rely on Marshal8e6 solutions to protect their businesses at the email and Web gateway.



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