



City of Lenexa Uses the M86 Web Filter and Reporter to Stop Spyware Threats

Client:

City of Lenexa

Web Site:

www.ci.lenexa.ks.us

Number of Users:

400+

Requirements:

Internet Filtering and Reporting

Solutions:

M86 Web Filter and Reporter

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Michael Lawrence
CISO & Network Administrator
City of Lenexa

Profile

Located in Johnson County, Kansas and a suburb of Kansas City, Missouri, the City of Lenexa is a good old-fashioned city with modern ideas. Lenexa (derived from Na-Nex-Se, the wife of Shawnee Chief Blackhoof) is quickly developing with tremendous growth both in commercial and residential development. New schools are being built every year to accommodate the rising population due to companies such as Applebee’s moving their headquarters to the city. In addition, Lenexa has been recognized as one of the Top Ten cities in the United States by Digital Cities, which examines how city governments have progressed in adopting and utilizing digital technologies to improve the delivery of services to their citizens.

Challenge

With over 400 Internet users, the City of Lenexa needed an Internet filtering solution that would not only reduce legal liability from inappropriate Web content in the workplace, but would also improve employee productivity. Most importantly, however, Lenexa needed a filtering solution that would stop employees from accidentally visiting sites that harbored spyware and other malware.

Before installing a hardware filtering solution, the city was utilizing a software solution. Michael Lawrence, CISO and Network Administrator, says, “Although the software filter’s authentication was decent enough, the solution itself was slowing down our network traffic and creating bottlenecks, since the filtered traffic had to pass through a proxy before reaching the user.” After their contract with the software filter was up, Mr. Lawrence and his team turned to a hardware solution for faster speed and lower maintenance. However, they discovered that this leading provider’s authentication would only check the user’s identity every hour, rather than keeping a constant watch. “In a shared user environment such as ours,” Mr. Lawrence says, “there are a number of users who are continually moving around and using random computers. We needed a solution that would authenticate accurately each and every time a new user logged on but also be fail-safe, fast, and require low maintenance.”

Solutions

After evaluating several filtering solutions, Lenexa chose to install the M86 Web Filter and Reporter (M86 WFR) appliance. “We liked the fact that M86 offers an appliance,” says Mr. Lawrence. “I can see what pages a user goes to or tries to go to and what they get from those pages, including spyware and malware. With a software filter, I could only see partial URLs on the filter, and couldn’t tell from most reports which sites were blocked or allowed.”

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The M86 WFR is a dedicated network appliance that manages end-user access to Internet-based content. As a hardware filter, it utilizes “Pass-by Technology”, which means the filter is installed outside the flow of network traffic to “watch” rather than “stop and check” Web site requests. If it detects a request for a blocked site or IM network, data is then blocked from returning to the end-user.

In addition, the city is utilizing the M86 WFR’s Authentication feature. Stored on the network server, the authenticator runs as soon as an employee logs into the city’s network. Because it runs locally, it provides non-repudiation and gets a user’s information real-time from the workstation. Therefore, no matter where that user goes on the network, he or she is being authenticated. “The Authentication reinforces the safe and secure work environment and provides good accountability,” says Mr. Lawrence. “It prevents employees from accidentally or purposefully accessing inappropriate material, including bugs that can bring the network down.”

Secure and effective authentication is essential for reports on employee Internet use. “I need to be in a position of certainty when I create a report for a supervisor,” says Mr. Lawrence. “Anything that warrants severe sanctions needs to have clear proof. The M86 WFR’s methodology is accurate in reporting what any user is doing at any given time on the Internet.”

Finally, its reporting feature allows administrators to understand the access trends, what “problem areas” need increased attention, where threats originate and what adjustments are needed. Specifically, the M86 WFR’s detailed forensic reports provide several unique criteria that help organizations build compelling reports. “User intent” is gauged by documenting the full length URLs visited, as well as the “keywords” used within a search engine text box. It tracks this behavior so the administrator has the documentation necessary to validate and remediate the problem. “The M86 WFR has cut the time I used to spend creating manual reports for managers by more than half,” says Mr. Lawrence.

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ABOUT M86 SECURITY

M86 Security is the global expert in real-time threat protection and the industry’s leading Secure Web Gateway provider. The company’s appliance, software, and Software as a Service (SaaS) solutions for Web and email security protect more than 24,000 customers and over 17 million users worldwide. M86 products use patented real-time code analysis and behavior-based malware detection technologies as well as threat intelligence from M86 Security Labs to protect networks against new and advance threats, secure confidential information, and ensure regulatory compliance. The company is based in Orange, California with international headquarters in London and development centers in California, Israel, and New Zealand.

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