

smoothwall

The Web You Want



Novalis Trust

Case Study



Industry: Charity

No of Users: 400

Solution: UTM

Requirements

- Customisable web filtering policies
- Compatible with a variety of devices

What's the background?

Novalis Trust was formed in 2008 to manage and administrate the education and care services provided by Cotswold Chine School and Paradise House. Cotswold Chine School is a school for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or special educational needs, and Paradise House is a long term residential community with educational and occupational experiences for adults with learning difficulties.

Based in Stroud, Gloucestershire, Novalis Trust has a total user count of 400. The IT team at Novalis consists of **Dan Heath, IT Technical Specialist**, and **Matt Donovan, IT Manager**.

What was the challenge?

Dan explains, "Our previous solution, Microsoft TMG, didn't cater for the huge array of devices

that require internet connection. Being both a school and a residential care home, we have the usual technology found in schools such as computers and whiteboards, as well as devices that you'll find at home such as games consoles and smart TVs. It was vital that the new solution was granular and flexible with time, location and user based filtering methods and that it integrated with active directory."

After having discussions with Smoothwall at IP Expo and BETT, Novalis had a trial of the SWG solution, "We had a list of scenarios that the solution needed to fulfill and Smoothwall was compatible with them all. The trial only lasted two weeks as we didn't see the need to sit on the trial for any longer."

After initially purchasing the SWG solution in 2014, Novalis have recently upgraded to the UTM solution for the additional VPN control feature.

Being both a school and a residential care home, we have a wide range of devices that require internet access, including games consoles and smart TVs. With Smoothwall we've managed to connect them all to our network.



How Smoothwall helped

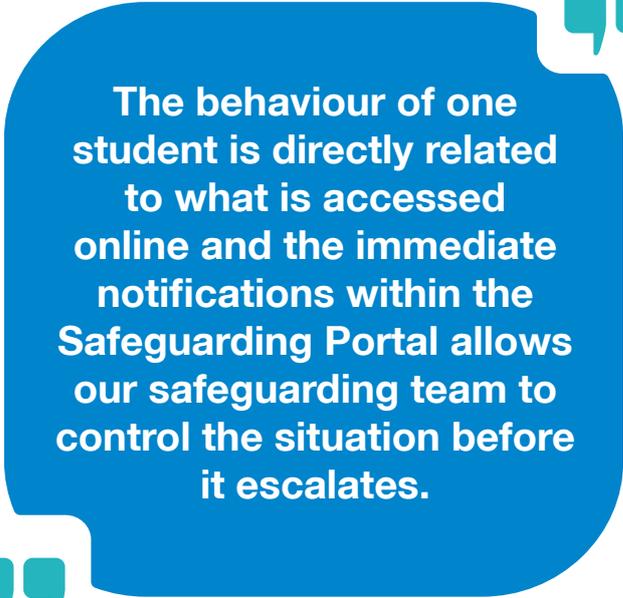
Dan explained the installation process “we had our own hardware so all we had to do was change the licence over - it was a seamless transition and as the language is familiar, we quickly got the system working. Since then, utilising some of the Smoothwall features such as the folders has made the system management a lot more simple.”

Dan went on to discuss how Smoothwall has helped with their previous issues. “With Smoothwall we’ve managed to connect all kinds of devices to the network, including smart TVs and games consoles, without the need for a special feature. The real-time web filter has really helped us figure out what we needed to whitelist to get these devices to work. It’s also pleased a lot of end users as they can now run software and app updates - something we were previously unable to do. The content modification feature has also proved very useful as we can now remove comments from YouTube videos.”

“As we have residential students, it’s very reassuring for us to know that they’re safe on all devices and at all times of the day.”

Matt commented on how the safeguarding suite has helped to monitor student behaviour, “the notifications feature has been invaluable to us! We’ve noticed that the behaviour of some of our young people can escalate very quickly, and in particular, the behaviour of one student is directly related to what can be accessed online. So these notifications mean we can forward them straight onto our safeguarding team who can quickly control the situation before it escalates.”

“The safeguarding team have access to the portal where they can create their own reports and even put temporary bans in place, allowing them to handle it all themselves unless they need more detailed information from us.”



The behaviour of one student is directly related to what is accessed online and the immediate notifications within the Safeguarding Portal allows our safeguarding team to control the situation before it escalates.



“Smoothwall is definitely more accurate at identifying appropriate and inappropriate content. Staff have also found it a lot easier to request for content to be unblocked - previously it involved us having to trace their steps using screenshots, but with Smoothwall they can just click unblock and it goes straight into our ticket queue. The process is a lot more streamlined for us and is more accessible to users.”

Dan commented on the recent training the team received, “the training was very useful! We were able to go through all of Smoothwall’s features in 2 days and Tim who delivered it, was very much an expert on the product and IT in general. The Accreditation Training available online is also a great way to learn about the product.”

When asked about support, Dan commented, “if there’s ever a problem Smoothwall are really easy to get hold of, and any issues have always been resolved quickly. We’ve never used more than half of our support credits which shows that the product is well built.”

“To summarise, I’d definitely recommend Smoothwall to everyone in the education, residential care and adult care industries!”

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