smoothwall
The Web You Want

Warwickshire County Council ICT Development Service

Case Study

Warwickshire County Council

Industry: Public Sector
No. of Users: 45,000
Solution: UTM

Requirements

- An education focussed solution
- Real-time content filtering

What's the background?

Warwickshire County Council's ICT Development Service (WCC ICTDS) manages IT systems for schools within Warwickshire. The network monitors 45,000 staff and pupil users across Primary and Secondary schools within the county. **Steve Holley, Systems Engineer** at WCC ICTDS works alongside 45 other IT personnel staff. The team also look after the filtering for all BYOD devices within the schools, by using wireless authentication to connect users to their secure Beyond Network.

What was the challenge?

Steve explained that their previous web filtering solution from WebSense just wasn't flexible enough to meet their growing user demands. Steve comments, "the main problem was that it wasn't education focussed and over time this meant the team were spending an ever

increasing amount of hours updating and maintaining the web filtering categories to meet the demands of the schools." Our solution didn't have an automatic content filter in place like Smoothwall's solution has, which meant it was just too restrictive."

Steve had realised it was time to make a change and find a solution that could meet their users demands whilst also being a long lasting and future proof investment for WCC ICTDS.

How Smoothwall helped

Following a rigorous tender process, Smoothwall's UTM solution came up top, due to it's flexibility and the fact that it would allow the IT department more control over their software, functionality that just wasn't possible with the other solutions they had evaluated.

Steve comments, "we went out and did a full tender process and we narrowed this down to three contenders but what won it for us was Smoothwall's flexibility. Everything we wanted to do Smoothwall allowed us to do."

> **The flexibility of the software is perfect for what we need and will continue to be moving forward.**

"For us, the ability to adapt and change the software made it a future proof solution." As a result of implementing Smoothwall's UTM solution it has helped WCC ICTDS to deliver a flexible filtering and monitoring service that has helped improve their schools online experience."

The solution has also had a significant impact in the reduction to the time the team spend monitoring their 45,000 users across multiple sites. It now only takes one person, instead of multiple people, to monitor the solution on a daily basis.

Additionally Smoothwall has helped improve their filtering capabilities, by setting different filtering rulesets for different year groups, as well as blocking and monitoring harmful or dangerous content without over blocking, ensuring their students to safely explore the internet.

The new safeguarding functionality is also being used to meet safeguarding obligations and the new Appropriate Filtering and Monitoring guidelines set out in September 2016.

With regards to how safeguarding works on their users BYOD devices, Steve comments "The management of our BYOD devices is done through our Beyond Network, which is operated by it's own Smoothwall appliance.

> **Smoothwall are great at being ahead of the game the whole time and are always in front when it comes to meeting the requirements faced by schools.**

"The Smoothwall solution allows us to offer safeguarding on these devices and we use our Beyond system to keep the whole network separate, so if there was to be a virus attack on a BYOD it can't affect the main network."

Warwickshire's Primary schools are filtered centrally whilst their Secondary schools all have their own onsite Smoothwall appliance. Steve continued to say "We also use safeguarding on our central Primary filters as well.

"In secondary schools however this is not the case but we are actively encouraging them to use the safeguarding feature, as it's quick to identify behaviour and it helps us monitor and look at lots of different things at the same time, which helps save us time overall."

When asked about Smoothwall's aftercare service Steve comments "The Service we have received from Smoothwall has been excellent. Second and third line support have been particularly helpful. We do sometimes get some tricky problems that we can't solve ourselves but the support agents have come in to help and have spent ages on the phone with us to resolve these issues and I don't think we would have got that anywhere else."