

TRI-COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

INDUSTRY:

Education

WEBSense INTEGRATION:

Cisco PIX
Microsoft® ISA server

"Websense gives the school districts what they need instead of something that merely complies with CIPA requirements."

Vince Humes, Director
Technology Solutions and Services
Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit

WebSense® – The Head of the Class for the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit

When school administrators in Pennsylvania's Erie, Warren, and Crawford counties met earlier this year about filtering internet content, they knew one thing for sure: they needed to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) without letting inappropriate content or haphazard blocking software get in the way of learning. The test would be reaching a consensus on how to do it.

"We act as a consortium so our school districts can benefit from the buying power of a group," says Vince Humes, director of technology solutions and services for the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit (Tri-County), which coordinates internet services for public school districts in northwestern Pennsylvania. Humes helps district representatives work together to decide which products to buy. The process usually involves a lot of time, research, testing, and some give and take along the way.

"We wanted to purchase 11,700 licenses for our students, staff, and faculty, a significant investment for our schools," Humes says. Tri-County conducted a rigorous evaluation of nine different products, grading their filtering capability, ease of use, category groupings, network integration, reporting, and cost. To be effective, Humes says, internet filtering must accomplish five basic objectives:

1. Help students, faculty, and staff focus on the task at hand.
2. Give students the internet access they need without inadvertently exposing networks to threats.
3. Eliminate the need to deploy staff to maintain local servers or individual computers.
4. Provide enduring value.
5. Be supported locally.

"WebSense Enterprise® consistently scored at the top of the list," Humes says.

WebSense Enterprise resides on a Windows 2003 server and is used in conjunction with a Cisco PIX or Microsoft ISA server at each school district. This makes it easy for districts to enforce multiple internet-use policies for groups of users, individuals, and workstations.

WebSense analysts continually monitor and group sites according to the type of content, applications, executable code, and protocols. The result is the WebSense Master Database, which contains more than 13 million websites organized into more than 90 categories of internet content in 50 languages. With WebSense Enterprise, fresh data uploads automatically daily.

"We wouldn't want to categorize sites ourselves because we couldn't keep up," Humes says.

To enhance the filtering capability and raise the level of protection against web-based threats, the districts deploy WebSense Premium Groups™ (PG). These enhance the internet filtering capability of WebSense Enterprise and raise the level of protection against web-based security threats, loss of confidential information, network performance, and IT department resources.

- **Bandwidth PG™** limits bandwidth-intensive sites, including streaming media, telephony, internet radio and TV, personal network storage, and peer-to-peer file sharing.
- **Productivity PG™** manages access to advertisements, message boards and clubs, sites that promote freeware and software downloads, instant messaging, online brokerage sites, and pay-to-surf sites.

- **Security PG™** blocks access to sites associated with spyware, keylogging, malicious code, phishing, and other threats to personal and confidential information.

Premium Groups enhance Websense Enterprise to give administrators precise control over how network resources are used. The results are fewer work orders associated with spyware, viruses, and programs that drain bandwidth and divert students' attention.

Comm Solutions Company in Malvern, PA, is working with Humes to deploy Websense Enterprise at each school district and provide technical and product support.

"They were responsive during the evaluation phase. It was indicative of the product support we expect," Humes says. "Plus, Comm Solutions is local. Having their expertise close by is important to us. They can give us the attention we need to maximize our investment."

"The combination of Comm Solutions and Websense was far and away the best value for the districts," Humes says. "We considered cheaper products, but the time to install, configure, and support them would have made them much more expensive."

In the end, he says, Websense gives the school districts what they need instead of something that merely complies with CIPA requirements.

"We have administrators, board members, and parents to answer to," Humes says. "They expect us to provide an appropriate learning environment for students and use our budgets wisely. Websense is the best solution we've seen."

About Websense

Websense, Inc. (NASDAQ: WBSN) is the worldwide leader of web filtering, and premier provider of web security and desktop security software. Websense software is preferred by leading Fortune 500 and FTSE customers, as well as government agencies and educational institutions. Websense software increases employee internet productivity and secures organizations from emerging internet threats by providing a proactive web security component that compliments traditional security solutions. Only Websense delivers flexible, integrated policy enforcement at the internet gateway, network, desktop and remotely with over 22 million seats under subscription, ranging in size from 100-person firms to many of the world's largest corporations.

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