

Case Study

Batesville Community Schools

PROFILE:

COUNTRY: USA
INDUSTRY: Education
SIZE: 2,200 Students

KEY REQUIREMENTS:

- A scalable, next-generation Internet filter with the ability to apply the same rules and policies whether students are accessing the web from school or home
- The ability to filter certain features or content within social media websites while allowing access to other content
- The ability for IT staff to easily block or unblock sites as necessary
- Visibility into students' web use—without burdening IT staff

MAIN BENEFITS:

- Very granular web filtering and policy control from wherever students connect
- Powerful insight into students' web use through customizable, automated reports
- The ability to block students' use of VPN tunneling apps and other rogue applications, preventing students from circumventing the web filter

Powerful, Yet Easy to Manage: ContentKeeper Gives Batesville Leaders More Control with Less Effort

OBJECTIVE

With a small IT staff and limited technical expertise, Batesville Community School Corporation in Indiana needed a mobile security and web filtering solution that didn't require a lot of time to set up, use, or maintain. The system had to work flawlessly, giving officials very granular control and allowing IT staff to run detailed reports without a lot of administrative hassle. It also had to filter students' Internet access from home as well as school.

SOLUTION

Batesville found exactly what it needed in ContentKeeper, a full-featured web filtering and security platform that works with any device or browser. With ContentKeeper, Batesville leaders have better control over the content that students can access and greater visibility into where students are spending their time online. ContentKeeper is also saving time for IT staff, making the system a win-win for everyone involved.

Background

Batesville has had a 1:1 mobile learning program in place for nearly a decade. All students in grades 3-12 use Macbook Air laptops for learning, and students in kindergarten through second grade are given iPads.

"One thing that's unique about our program is that we let *all* students take their devices home with them," says Director of Technology Support Michael Weiler. This places a key challenge on IT staff, who must ensure that students remain protected when they go online from home.

Batesville was using another web filtering system, but it didn't always work well. Getting information about suspicious search queries was a struggle, and the district could only block or unblock websites at the top domain level instead of blocking only certain subpages. The solution also required a complex, multistep process to block or unblock sites.

"We needed something easier to use," Weiler says. After talking with officials at other school systems, Weiler and his team tried ContentKeeper. "It worked really well," he says. "Within a few days, we were up and running. I was surprised at how easy it was."

Simple to administer

With ContentKeeper, IT staff can set up policy-based controls and block or unblock specific web content with just a few clicks using a simple, intuitive interface. ContentKeeper is also compatible with the school's mobile device management (MDM) system, FileWave. FileWave provides seamless integration with their Macbook Airs and iPads.

Reporting is now much easier as well. ContentKeeper sends out automated reports at designated intervals, showing which students have made suspicious search queries or tried accessing blocked websites. Weiler has set up the system so that the principals at each school receive a daily report of

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—Michael Weiler
Director of Technology Support

their students’ questionable web activity, as well as real-time alerts if there is any suggestion of possible self-harm or a threat to others.

“The reporting just works,” Weiler says. “I no longer get calls asking me to look up information about what students were doing online.”

Powerful control, on or off campus

Another benefit is that ContentKeeper gives the district much more fine-tuned control over the types of material that students can access. Because the system can decrypt and inspect Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) web traffic at very high speeds, Batesville can make top-level social media domains like Facebook and YouTube available to students but still block specific content within these domains. This gives educators more flexibility to use social media as a teaching tool.

“I like the system’s granularity,” Weiler says. “We can go in and block a particular video if we need to. I also like how we can apply policies to specific grade levels or even individuals.”

ContentKeeper also provides the exact same functionality whether students are at school or home. That’s important in a school system where students as young as kindergarten are taking their devices home.

The certificate that Batesville pushes out to each device through FileWave allows the district to apply the same filtering policies to students’ Internet use when they’re connecting from outside of school. What’s more, the system’s reporting capabilities extend off campus as well.

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An added bonus

As an added bonus, ContentKeeper’s App Defender can detect and block VPN tunneling apps and other rogue applications that students might use to circumvent the web filter.

“We found that some high school students were downloading VPNs to get around the filter, so we included Application Defender when we purchased ContentKeeper,” Weiler says. “Those students learned very quickly that they couldn’t do that anymore.”

By putting a stop to the use of web proxies, Batesville has not only reduced its legal liability but has reclaimed lost bandwidth as well. “We have a 1 Gbps pipe coming in, and our bandwidth use hovered around 50 percent before,” he explains. “Now, we’re only using about 30 percent of our available bandwidth. Our network is running faster than ever.”

RESULT

ContentKeeper has given Batesville leaders more fine-tuned control over the content that students can access, which has empowered teachers to use YouTube and other social media tools for instruction in a safe and responsible manner. The system has also given Batesville administrators more insight into their students’ online activity, while reducing the burden on IT staff. “We’ve been extremely pleased with how it works,” Weiler concludes.

