

Case Study

Henley High School

PROFILE:

COUNTRY: Australia

INDUSTRY: Education

SIZE: 1,300 students

KEY REQUIREMENTS:

- Monitor student Internet usage
- Block inappropriate content and malware threats
- Support expanding usage and technology as the school's needs change

MAIN BENEFITS:

- Effective, age-appropriate protection from malware and inappropriate content
- Automatically updated against newly discovered threats through global Closed Loop Collaborative Filtering
- Rock-solid hardware has continued to scale along with the school's bandwidth demands.



HENLEY
HIGH SCHOOL

As Henley High School Grows ContentKeeper Protection Grows Along With Them

OBJECTIVE

Henley High School needed a Web filtering solution that would be able to stay ahead of its students' ever more-complex usage. When it first installed dual ADSL connections to provide Internet to its students, it needed a way to secure those services and implemented a ContentKeeper gateway that has continued to protect the school's students and staff for more than 12 years – running smoothly and quickly even as its bandwidth consumption has exploded.

BACKGROUND

Today's digital, data-rich online learning resources are far more complex than those for which Henley High School (HHS) configured its network more than a decade ago. Yet just months after the school upgraded to a 10Gbps Internet connection, its ContentKeeper architecture has made the transition without missing a beat.

Located in Henley Beach just west of the Adelaide CBD, HHS was originally providing online access through a pair of ADSL broadband services running at a few megabits per second each.

The school needed a way of monitoring and controlling students' access to age-appropriate learning materials and, ICT manager Andrew Dodd recalls, the choice of a ContentKeeper solution made perfect sense early on.

"At the end of the day, we have to be accountable for making sure that our students are safe on the Internet," he recalls.

"We needed a comprehensive filtering solution when we first put in a dual ADSL link, and ContentKeeper has just kept up in line with what we have been doing since then."

Despite students' predictable efforts to circumvent controls, the school's IT team has worked hard to make its online environment "attractive" so that students' services remain under the supervision of the ContentKeeper platform.

A rock-solid solution

The HHS solution is based on ContentKeeper Web Filter Pro, Report Central, and App Defender as well as a CK-SM5 hardware appliance, a 1U rack device that supports up to 4Gbps of concurrent data flow, 10 GB Ethernet, and more than 10,000 users.

"Most of the time it has just been a set-and-forget solution," Dodd says. "You don't really need to access it often, and that's the beauty of the solution."

"Thanks to the Closed Loop Collaborative Filtering feature, if we come across a Web site that is not categorised and I categorise it, within a few hours, every ContentKeeper box in the world has that change."

“We have never had any issues with the appliance because they are pretty rock-solid and bulletproof. ContentKeeper handles any type of authentication method, and it has been very flexible in the ways that it has allowed us to provide students with managed access to the Internet”

—Andrew Dodd
ICT Manager

HHS has made extensive use of ContentKeeper’s policy-based filtering, which allows it to enforce different filtering standards for younger students, then apply new policies as the students mature and progress through different year levels.

The ContentKeeper system has also matured along with the school’s requirements, with its support for a broad range of authentication methods proving to be another valuable feature.

HHS was, for example, originally using a captive portal approach to user authentication but now uses 802.1x standards-based authentication that enables access from a broad range of student devices.

“ContentKeeper handles any type of authentication method,” Dodd says, “and it has been very flexible in the ways that it has allowed us to provide students with managed access to the Internet.”

Solid performance, solid support

You don’t stay with a product through 5 generations over more than 12 years unless it’s suiting your needs, and Dodd says the ContentKeeper solution has stood the test of time.

As the school’s technology needs have grown over the years, its more than 1300 students have consumed an ever richer range of cloud and other learning services – increasing aggregate bandwidth requirements and forcing the school to explore new bandwidth options.

Several years ago, HHS switched to a fibre connectivity solution from educational supplier AARNet, then upgraded this to 10Gbps capacity in early 2019 as it became clear that bandwidth consumption was going to continue increasing dramatically.

Subsequent generations of ContentKeeper appliance have kept up with that growth, providing line-speed filtering and traffic monitoring even as peak traffic pushes into the gigabits per second.

“We have never had any issues with the appliance because they are pretty rock-solid and bulletproof.”

Whenever HHS has had questions or issues with the solution, Dodd says, ContentKeeper’s support has been “easy to deal with and always resolves any issues promptly”.

This includes specialised expertise in ensuring that the solution accommodates purpose-built educational technology such as the mandatory browser used during exams such as NAPLAN.

“The main reason we have stuck with ContentKeeper for this long is their support,” he adds.

RESULT

Henley High School’s investment in ContentKeeper filtering and management tools has proved invaluable in controlling the exposure of students to malicious and potentially harmful online content. The support of a global network of customers ensures that new threats are quickly blocked as they are identified, while robust policy-based management allows the school to tailor controls for each stage of its students’ development.

ContentKeeper has also proven itself to be highly scalable, growing over the years to keep up with the school’s increasing bandwidth demands. This will become even more important in coming years, when planned expansion brings another 400 students into the school.

Throughout it all, Dodd has confidence that the rock-solid design of the ContentKeeper solution will continue to keep the network protected.

“More students means more bandwidth, and we’re not even really touching the sides of the Internet service we’ve got at the moment,” he says.

“ContentKeeper has helped us maintain the balance between letting students have access to most of the stuff they want to access, without the stuff that is inappropriate.”