



Guardian

Intelligent Web Filtering

Committed to extending the resources available to teachers and students beyond the classroom walls

Saranac Central School District

CASE STUDY

Background

Saranac Central School District comprises of 4 schools (ranging from elementary to high school level) based in the North-Eastern corner of New York State. The District has a combined student enrolment of over 1600 and technology services are overseen by NERIC, the North Eastern Regional Information Center, based in Albany, New York.

NERIC is committed to developing their shared and interactive online learning network, which provides a range of internet-based resources to all the North Eastern school districts. Jamie Steenberge is the Coordinator of Administrative Services/Technical Support for NERIC and regularly visits schools in the area to implement technical support solutions, training and software installations.

The Requirement

With the District's existing software, (eTrust Intrusion Detection) Jamie was spending up to 4 hours a day on network security. With his time and resources stretched, and concerns over CIPA compliancy, he desperately needed a more sophisticated and efficient web filtering package. A firewall was also a crucial requirement - prior to 2004, many schools in the Northern New York state area were not protected by local firewalls. Saranac was one of the first districts to implement one, fortunately just before the destructive Blaster viruses hit;

“ While other districts were running around doing zero-day updates, we simply blocked our ports and got on with more productive work . ”

NERIC is also developing their shared online network, which already offers bandwidth intensive resources such as real-time classroom instruction, virtual field trips and interactive video distance learning. To maximize the potential of learning tools like these, bandwidth needs to be properly managed so that real-time and interactive traffic can be prioritized.



IN BRIEF

Requirement:

A more sophisticated and efficient web filtering package and firewall.

Solution:

School Guardian

Benefit:

Provided an efficient, cost-effective solution - self-manageable and flexible

Saranac District's solution needed to be;

1. **Easy to use** so that non-technical staff throughout the seven schools could manage day-to-day tasks with minimal training.
2. **Reliable** and self-manageable enough to be supported by field-based technical staff (like Jamie) with limited time and resources.
3. **Flexible** enough to meet the needs of a large and varied user base including teachers and students of widely differing ages.
4. **Compatible** with a broad base of hardware including both Windows and Mac systems.
5. **Scalable** enough for NERIC to implement over multiple districts.

The Solution

School Guardian provided an efficient and cost effective solution to all of the above requirements. Jamie is delighted about the amount of time and effort it has saved and has been pleasantly surprised by the proactive level of support provided by SmoothWall's staff. He says Guardian's 'easy-to-use' interface is a particularly valuable feature;

“ One of the biggest advantages for us is that Guardian is so self-manageable, you don't need much support and even the most non-technical staff can work with the easy-to-use interface. ”

Saranac Central District was also something of a test-model for NERIC, who are presently developing their own e-security standards for District-wide implementation. The intention is now for School Guardian to become an important part of NERIC's future IT provision;

“ Following the success of School Guardian in Saranac's schools, we [NERIC] now plan to 'roll it out' to other districts in the North Eastern area. ”

Further Technical Information

Express 2.0 versus School Guardian

By installing the free version of SmoothWall's firewall (Express 2.0) for an initial trial period, NERIC was able to extensively evaluate a less sophisticated version of the software beforehand. Jamie explained;

“ Although Express lacks the easy-to-use functionality of School Guardian, it still proved to be an excellent product and so I had no difficulty justifying the need for a more advanced and supported version. ”



PROJECT SUMMARY

Client:

Saranac Central School District, NY

Software:

School Guardian

Hardware:

Dell Optiplex GX620

User Base:

1800 users on 1000 PCs

Network:

DS3 Internet Connection with 1Gbit between schools

Environment:

Windows and Mac

User Authentication

Microsoft Active Directory

SmoothWall

Email: sales@smoothwall.net

Tel: 1-800 959 3760

Fax: 1-888 899 9164

www.smoothwall.net