



Industry: Education
No. of Users: 3,100
Solution: UTM

Requirements

- High throughput
- Ease of use
- Product reliability

Case Study

What's the background?

There was only one web filtering option in mind when **Landon Allen** started his new role as **Director of Information technology at Spencer Community School District** in Spencer, Iowa.

The 3,100-user school district had issues with their previous web filter and wanted a consistent solution that was easy to use. Though the district's 1:1 program initiative focuses on 2,300 Chromebooks for 2nd through 12th graders, their network also consists of iPads and Windows computers for teachers and administrators.

When Landon took over as the new Director of Information Technology in 2017, he tested three other web filters before choosing Smoothwall. Ultimately, his positive experience with Smoothwall at his previous district influenced his decision when the time came to make the change.

What was the problem?

While their existing web filter handled the basic demands of their district's network, it lacked in efficient and consistent functionality. Landon and his team had struggled with managing throughput and maintaining connectivity that regularly left their users with protection.

What's more, even when their filter did work, it only scanned URLs and resulted in inaccurate reporting and overblocking. While some the educational content filtered was blocked, their filter struggled to block all inappropriate content; this made it difficult for the Spencer IT team to manage blocklists and tailor them to specific groups.

It was obvious that their previous web filter could not keep up with internet's role in learning environments.



How we helped

Spencer schools needed a reliable solution that would protect their network. Smoothwall's UTM was chosen to be an all-in-one solution, providing content-aware web filtering, anti-malware, and next-generation firewall.

Consolidating their tools was just the first step in simplifying their network security. Landon and his team put their blocklist issues to rest with content-aware analysis and customized policy groups.

Spencer schools activated the Safeguarding feature that complemented the UTM's easy-to-use solution. With granular and real-time reporting, Spencer administrators now receive alerts of serious breaches of their web safety policy and create a background for the activity related to the breach.



“One of the wonderful things about Smoothwall is having the ability to scan the entire content on a page in milliseconds before determining if the page should be blocked.”

In addition to reporting, Safeguarding's content categorization uses the analyzed traffic and assigns it to seven categories of concern based on the context of previous online activity. This has given the Iowa school district an added layer of student safety.

“Smoothwall's UTM has simplified how we manage our network. It's education-specific features help us protect students from online harm and maintains productivity, all at an affordable price,” said Landon.

To read more about how Smoothwall can improve **productivity, security and peace of mind** for your users
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