

Case Study

Complete Visibility, Security and Application Performance Control

Client:

Hillside Board of Education
New Jersey, USA
(3,400 students, 7 campuses)

Cymphonix Product:

Network Composer NC1500

Situation

Hillside School District in New Jersey is a specialization-focused public school district comprising preschool through college-prep programs. With over 3,400 students and seven separate campuses district technology administrators are tasked with maintaining productive data flow for students and faculty while protecting them from threats.

In addition to managing traditional networking challenges the Hillside technology administrators were faced with slow Internet response times, spyware and virus infected machines, content-filtering service fees, and illegal peer-to-peer content downloads. In 2004 district budgets began to be impacted as administrators were forced to pay for overages just to keep Internet connectivity fast enough for mission-critical applications.

Challenge

Hillside needed a solution to protect critical network resources and give priority to district applications. The district's technology administrators had several priorities for any new solution. First, they needed visibility into what was actually going on with their Internet traffic. They needed to understand which computers were monopolizing Internet resources and

why. So, by understanding Internet traffic administrators hoped to accurately forecast the amount of bandwidth the district would need in order to remain productive and still avoid budget-taxing overages. Also, by gaining visibility they hoped to be able to prove or disprove the need for an infrastructure upgrade. Second, they needed to identify which threats they were facing and which computers were already infected. By identifying threats proactively administrators could implement strategic security solutions to stop infections from entering the network. Finally, they wanted a solution that would allow them to automatically block various threat types and prioritize valuable Internet usage.

Hillside evaluated numerous threat management solutions including router upgrades, managed services, and add-on solutions to their current hardware. None of these solutions would provide them with the visibility, protection, and performance improvement they needed. Even unified threat management converged appliances fell short of their requirements – they provided the security component, but could not deliver the visibility or application performance control the district needed.



“Since we installed Network Composer we’ve seen speeds that we’ve never seen before.”
- Michael Schwarz, Technology Manager

Like many enterprises with deployed point security products, Hillside School District was coming up on a number of renewals for its single-use systems. Technology administrators were looking to consolidate these security features onto a single, easy to administer security platform. In addition, the district wanted to ensure any new security appliance would not degrade its network performance, and would operate at the gateway outside of a heterogeneous network environment.

Solution

Hillside School District chose Cymphonix’s Network Composer NC 1500 to gain complete visibility, security, and application performance control. The Network Composer NC 1500 goes beyond deep-packet scanning with its Cross-Layer Intelligence (XLI™) engine which scans, identifies, and controls network communications across all layers. This technology allows administrators to identify and control Internet traffic at the gateway of the network.

Within just a few hours after implementing the Network Composer NC 1500 administrators were able to see that illegal peer-to-peer downloads and other malicious applications were taking between 90-95% of their bandwidth daily. The Network Composer 1500 also revealed which computers were generating unproductive traffic because of peer-to-peer, spyware, and viruses. Administrators were able to clean individual machines and then begin proactively managing traffic at the Internet gateway. The Network Composer NC 1500 was configured to deliver robust content filtering, anti-spyware, and anti-virus protection. And finally, technology administrators were able to prioritize district applications, email, and other mission-critical data.

Because of the visibility provided by the Network Composer NC 1500 administrators were also able to accurately identify and receive approval for the infrastructure upgrade – preparing the district to meet the demands of future students.

Success

“With thousands of students and administrators running different applications on our network, we needed a comprehensive solution that would deliver visibility into the demands we place on our network, and then allow us to control data flow so that mission-critical information would have highest priority,” said Michael Schwarz, technology manager at the Hillside Board of Education. “After implementing Cymphonix’s solution we immediately saw the value. Not only did we have the visibility we were looking for, but the security delivered has surpassed our expectations.”

“The Network Composer NC 1500 delivers tremendous value very quickly. In comparison to the other solutions we evaluated, the NC 1500 combines gateway threat management, content filtering, and other features without extensive service fees. Our Internet response is much quicker now that we’ve prioritized our traffic with the NC 1500 so we’ve also eliminated the need for bandwidth overages.” Michael Schwarz, Technology Manager



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See how Network Composer delivers visibility, security, and performance in one reliable package. Contact your authorized Cymphonix reseller for login information contact Cymphonix directly at 866-511-1155 toll-free or at sales@cymphonix.com