

New York School District Stops Students from Accessing Tunnel Web Sites with Burstek Software

FORT MYERS, FL – March 7, 2008 – Burstek and client Jordan-Elbridge Central School District want to let parents and school administrators everywhere know about a new twist in the growing problem of student access to inappropriate Web content from school networks: Anonymous proxy sites.

Jordan-Elbridge Central School District is located in a rural community between Syracuse and Auburn, New York and includes 3 campuses with over 1,600 k-12 students. Clark Smith, Director of Operations at Jordan-Elbridge cautions anyone who thinks the installation of basic Web site blocking software will protect children from the dangers of the Internet to take heed: "The kids have found a way to circumvent some of those tools with "Tunnel" sites."

Tunnel Web sites are anonymous proxy sites designed to help Internet surfers get around filtering tools and access whatever they want on the Web anonymously, from social networking sites like MySpace to pornography, and new tunnel sites are rapidly increasing. "Tunnel sites present a particularly serious problem for education because of their popularity among Internet savvy young people, who are constantly motivated by the age-old challenge of 'getting around the system'," says Smith.

When Smith's IT team discovered high school students bypassing their former filtering solution through tunneling sites, their first challenge was determining exactly how many and who. Like many other schools, computer workstations at Jordan-Elbridge are shared; further, their filter not only wasn't blocking tunnel sites, it couldn't provide the detailed reporting required to identify the extent of the problem.

Finding an advanced Internet security solution at minimal cost is part of the challenge for a school district on a budget. Most budget tools filter by IP addresses, and therefore cannot identify actual users and the sites they are going to.

Smith found Burstek's bt-LogAnalyzer software to be the ideal solution for their ISA server environment. "The software integrates seamlessly into Active Directory, so we were able to generate reports on Internet activity by actual user name or group membership" He adds.

The school was able to take disciplinary action with the students and reinforce the school's Acceptable Use Policy with the entire student body. However, reporting on the problem was only part of the solution, and Smith quickly added Burstek's bt-WebFilter to block access to Anonymizers and proxy sites and all other inappropriate Web content.

"At the heart of our software is a dynamic, robust control list with over 50 categories, including Anonymizers", says Michael Faisst, Director of Product Development Burstek. The list is continuously updated with new sites and content. "We also offer customers the opportunity to

contribute to the control list in a program called Web Extras, as Jordan-Elbridge does," Faisst added. "They regularly run reports on sites that students are trying to access and send them to our control list technicians for integration."

Of course, not all inappropriate access is intentional, which is why a vital learning tool like the Web can also be a dangerous place for children. Faisst says that in addition to curious minds, a miss-key or click can quickly lead to the wrong places if unfiltered. "Burstek prevents the infection of malicious code and spyware obtained through inadvertent activity as well, which protects organizations from security threats before they enter the network," he added.

Delivering CIPA compliance as well as confidence in student protection for parents and school administrators are vital parts of the mission, says Smith. "Keeping the kids safe is what it's all about. Burstek enables us to monitor and protect them from both accidental and intentional access, and allows us to deliver safe Internet access for learning."

Burstek has been providing affordable, sophisticated Internet security solutions to global organizations since 1997. Flagship software tools, bt-WebFilter and bt-LogAnalyzer enable thousands of businesses, schools and non-profit organizations to turn the Internet into a powerful, safe tool for all of their users.

To learn more about anonymous proxy and tunneling sites or Internet security solutions, visit our website at www.burstek.com.

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