

The Organization

South Dakota State Government
www.state.sd.us

The Challenge

Secure network resources and protect students from unsuitable Internet content with an integrated, cost-effective Internet security and content filtering solution.

The SonicWALL Solution

Over 200 SonicWALL firewall/VPN appliances to protect the district network. SonicWALL Content Filtering Service to prevent students from accessing inappropriate Web sites. SonicWALL GMS software for easy centralized management of the overall solution.

The Results

- South Dakota schools benefit from secure, reliable network protection while preventing students from accessing inappropriate Web content
- Management costs are reduced using SonicWALL's Global Management System to centrally manage firewall and content filtering services
- Deployment and maintenance costs are reduced by standardizing on SonicWALL's Internet security and content filtering solution

South Dakota State Government Leverages SonicWALL Security Solutions for Its New Cyber Security Project

To deliver an enriched learning environment, the state government of South Dakota introduced "Connecting the Schools," an initiative designed to link students and faculty through a statewide network providing Internet access, distance learning opportunities and shared educational applications. Aware of the potential risks of Internet access, the state also launched a "Cyber Security Project" to safeguard its information system and protect students from inappropriate Web content. South Dakota chose the SonicWALL® Content Filtering Service with a range of SonicWALL firewall/VPN appliances and Global Management System software as the foundation of its Cyber Security Project.

An Integrated Solution

After reviewing solutions from CheckPoint®, Symantec™ and SonicWALL, the state selected SonicWALL because it offered a cost-effective, end-to-end security solution. They also solicited the help of Golden West Technologies, a full-service business communications provider and SonicWALL partner. "Competing solutions required either additional server hardware at each school, or one large server at the state level, which could result in a single point of failure," explains Jim Edman, manager of network technologies at the state of South Dakota. "The SonicWALL and Golden West Technologies solution provides integrated content filtering, superior firewall protection and strong support services in a competitively priced solution. This offers schools the flexibility to control their own filtering."

The state installed more than 200 SonicWALL firewall/VPN appliances. To control student access to the Internet, SonicWALL's Content Filtering Service was deployed throughout the network. Golden West Technologies was selected to help manage these firewall appliances and content filtering solution using SonicWALL's award-winning Global Management System (GMS) software.

Superior Content Filtering

A primary objective of the Cyber Security Project was to create a safe Internet environment. South Dakota deployed SonicWALL's Content Filtering Service (CFS) to accomplish this objective, providing schools with a comprehensive database of more than 4 million continuously updated Web sites, domains and IP addresses along with a sophisticated rating and caching system that consistently blocks objectionable Web content. "SonicWALL delivers an enterprise-class solution without requiring a costly, dedicated filtering server," explains Edman. "This was a key requirement because we are operating under a very limited budget."

South Dakota School District

"Offering a cost-effective and powerful Internet security and content filtering solution, SonicWALL helps keep our students focused on their school work while enabling teachers to leverage the Internet to deliver an enhanced curriculum. The end result: a safe, educational experience."

*—Jim Edman
Manager of Network
Technologies
South Dakota School District*

With an equally limited team of network administrators, the state required a filtering solution that was also easy to deploy and manage. Using their SonicWALL firewalls as an interface for flexible policy management, the school's network administrators could customize lists of blocked and permitted sites, or deliver unrestricted Web access to certain users. "SonicWALL Content Filtering Service enables us to accommodate teachers' requests to provide access to sites that complement a course topic, but might otherwise be blocked," says Edman. "As a result, we can offer a safer learning experience to our students."

Convenient, Remote Management and Centralized Reporting

With a distributed network spanning more than 76,000 square miles, remote management was a key requirement for the South Dakota School District. Golden West Technologies supports the district from one central location using SonicWALL Global Management System (GMS) software. "Using SonicWALL GMS, we can manage all security appliances and services, configure firewall settings, deploy VPN access to any user and add firewall upgrades with a click of a button," says James Van Loan, Account Manager at Golden West Technologies.

The state and its school districts also take full advantage of SonicWALL's GMS to generate a wide range of real-time and historical reports that provide insight into usage trends and security activities and help demonstrate CIPA compliance. "These reports clearly show us who has been trying to access blocked Web sites," comments Edman. "We use this information to fine tune our filtering policy—to block sites that should be blocked and to provide access to sites that we don't consider problematic."

A Safe, Enriched Educational Experience

By deploying SonicWALL Internet security solutions, the state has successfully accomplished its goal to secure network resources and protect students from inappropriate Web content. "As a cost-effective and powerful Internet security and content filtering solution, SonicWALL helps keep our students focused on their school work while enabling teachers to leverage the Internet to deliver an enhanced curriculum," concludes Edman. "The end result is a safe, educational experience."

SonicWALL Benefits

Integrated solutions

SonicWALL's firewall/VPN appliances serve as a platform for multiple security services, saving on integration and maintenance costs.

Network protection

SonicWALL offers a range of firewalls to act as a school's first line of defense against Internet security attacks.

Student protection

Content filtering protects students from inappropriate Web sites and keeps them on task by blocking access to chat rooms, instant messaging and online gaming.

Easy management

Centralized management provides the network with the latest updates to firewall and content filtering policies.

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