



Case Study – Lassen County, Calif. Office of Education keep students safe, school policies intact

California's Lassen County Office of Education is located about 220 miles north of Sacramento in the Northeastern portion of the state. The agency covers approximately 4,557 square miles. Its mission is to provide essential and necessary resources, services, support and leadership to more than 4,000 students attending all 12 of the public schools and districts in Lassen County that will assist in the improvement of programs and development of all children in reaching their fullest individual potential.

To that end, the Office of Education is halfway into its five-year technology plan that acts as a guide for schools that help them set policies and practices to meet the identified needs of integrating technology to:

- Improve student learning
- Provide equitable technology access and support
- Enable secure, timely information flow between home, school and the community
- Facilitate coordinated, ongoing high quality educational technology professional development

One key element of their mission is to ensure the safety of students while accessing online material, shielding them from inappropriate sites while on campus but still providing them the availability to utilize the Internet to its full education potential. Herein lies the dilemma – how to implement an effective and standard web filtering system that can balance the seemingly disparate policies that are set by each school district.

So called "blanket" filtering doesn't work well when staff has different needs for Internet access, but the individual management of such differences is far too costly for the small local government agency. With that, Lassen County Office of Education began a comprehensive search for cost effective solutions from various providers, and came across Phantom Technologies. The global provider of Internet Content Filtering and security solutions provides for businesses and schools that are effective and easy to use.

"Our big issue is that each site has its own firewall limiting the ability to provide flexible filtering policies for specific teachers, programs and students. We needed to incorporate Internet filtering solutions at each site and have the ability to manage them centrally," said Robert Talley, Technology Coordinator for the Lassen County Office of Education. "After reviewing most major solutions, we chose the iBoss with the Clustering feature.

This allows all sites to be managed through one appliance and consolidated reports from all sites into one centrally managed appliance.”

The system’s reports details violations, traffic usage, network activity and bandwidth consumption that enables system administrators to view action and infringements from entire groups to individual users. Usage reports outline all port, Application, and Category IP accesses to and from the network. Additionally, the iBoss platform can generate and email very clear and compelling graphs to show activities based on time, thereby allowing Lassen County Office of Education’s technology staff to adjust network layouts, customize filtering and identify risk before they become a problem.

“This is a key benefit for us. We can extract must needed information right after an occurrence and, in doing so, significantly reduce our liability concerns,” said Talley. “As important as it is to have a robust Web filtering solution, it’s equally vital to monitor and manage the system. This separates the true value added products from other tools – ones that provide added mission-critical capabilities without requiring additional manpower or office hours.”

More information is available at www.ipantom.com/ibe_overview_to.html.