



East Ayrshire Council Saves Money & Gains Advanced Web Filtering with Bloxx

“East Ayrshire Council has eliminated (infrastructure/supplier) complexity and made significant budget savings simply by deploying Bloxx web filtering. Looking at all the problems our previous systems caused us, and comparing it with our situation now we have Bloxx Web filtering, there’s no comparison. Bloxx is a definite winner.”

Ian Aston, Infrastructure Development Manager, East Ayrshire Council

BACKGROUND

East Ayrshire Council maintains strong, vibrant communities ensuring they have a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people’s needs.

Previous to Bloxx content filtering, the Council used a mixture of solutions to manage its Web filtering including a Microsoft ISA Server, ClearSwift MIMESweeper for Web and Websense Enterprise Manager.

The cost and complexity of maintaining these solutions was very high, and in terms of filtering Web content, the products were inadequate for the Council on a number of levels.

The Council wanted more customized control over what instant messaging and peer to peer applications to allow or deny to its users. In addition, as the Council filters all of the schools’

internet activity, the Council had concerns that students were trying to circumvent the existing filtering solutions to gain access to anonymous proxies, which enable users to bypass Web filters.

Added to this were network performance issues, as Ian Aston, Infrastructure Development Manager at East Ayrshire Council, explains:

“We often experienced very sluggish Internet speeds and the erratic performance of the various systems seemed to be a major factor in this. For example, we saw that there were CPU load spikes and memory usage was often very high. In addition, when we made configuration changes we frequently had to reboot the systems, which meant that our users lost Internet access for a period of time.”

“All these problems, led us to review our Web filtering systems.”

CLIENT:

East Ayrshire Council

SECTOR:

Council

USERS:

16,000+

KEY BENEFITS:

- ✔ Significantly reduced budget costs
- ✔ Supplier complexity eliminated
- ✔ Anonymous proxy use significantly reduced.
- ✔ Faster, more reliable Internet access delivered
- ✔ IT support calls significantly reduced
- ✔ Increased user and network protection
- ✔ Faster and easier reporting on Internet activity

THE CHALLENGE

Following a careful review of its needs, East Ayrshire Council specified a number of key criteria that its new solution had to provide.

A major requirement was that the content filter had to be able to filter Web pages in real-time. This would minimize the number of support calls the IT service desk would receive and would be a much more effective method to enforce Internet policies.

The new filter had to be able to identify and block new anonymous proxies and have the ability to block IM and P2P applications. Malware protection also had to be incorporated into the filtering system.

The Council wanted a filter that didn't slow down Internet access and that included drilldown reporting so users' Internet activity could be examined.

THE SOLUTION

After reviewing and trialling a number of Web content filters, the Council selected Bloxx Web filtering to protect its 16,000+ users at hundreds of sites, as it successfully met all the criteria specified.

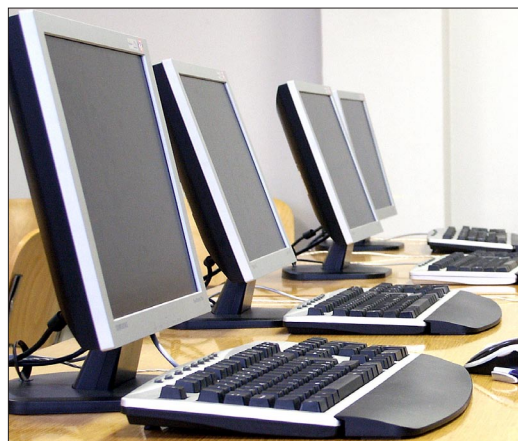
The Bloxx Web filtering appliance range uses Bloxx's patented Tru-View Technology, which can identify, categorise and block Web pages in real-time.

This provides a high level of user and network protection, increased user productivity and reduced organisation risk and liability.

THE RESULTS

Since East Ayrshire Council installed Bloxx, the benefits to the IT team, the organisation and its users have been great.

"Being part of the public sector, we are always concerned about rising costs. Not only was Bloxx a much more cost effective solution compared to other Web filters we looked at, but after routing all our Education and Library users through the Bloxx filtering cluster, East Ayrshire Council has made



significant budget savings simply by introducing the Bloxx solution. It's fantastic that by choosing Bloxx we have made a big impact on our IT budget."

Bloxx Tru-View Technology's real-time categorization of Web pages is very accurate and a fantastic benefit to the Council, as Ian explains:

"Tru-View is extremely useful; now all Web pages are filtered, categorized into one of Bloxx's large number of categories, and policies applied to them in real-time; before we had to block all uncategorised Websites, which caused huge frustration for users and for my IT Team."

"In terms of anonymous proxies specifically, Tru-View Technology is excellent at identifying and blocking them even if they are completely new and no-one has ever seen them before."

"We have a lot of education users and the ability to enforce Safesearch on search engines, even when users try to change it, helps to provide a safer learning environment."

The Council can now customize which file types to allow and control who has access to download these, which further protects its network from online threats and helps to significantly speed it up.

In addition, Bloxx incorporates anti-virus and anti-malware blocking as standard, which has helped reduce the number of viruses and spyware infecting the Council's network. Also, the appliance blocks access to phishing sites, which helps minimize the risk of fraud.

“Schools are now offering Web-based training and online lessons due to the increase in Internet access speeds following the introduction of Bloxx.”

Ian Aston, Infrastructure Development Manager

The firmware, URL database, phishing and virus feed and are all updated automatically, keeping the Council on top of the latest developments.

With such a large user base, the Council has to have a number of Internet policies depending on the circumstances of the user. The Bloxx content filter allows you to have any number of different policies and synchronises with Active Directory to pull in all the different user groups.

“The ability to quickly create numerous Web policies and synchronise them with different working and non-working times is extremely useful. Children and public access users have a tighter policy applied than Corporate users and Library users have filtering based on age group. It’s very useful to have such granular control and apply more relevant policies to each group.”

A major benefit to the Council is that Internet access speeds have definitely improved and there is no downtime whenever IT make configuration changes.

“This has made a real difference to our users: schools are now offering Web-based training and online lessons due to the increase in Internet access speeds following the introduction of Bloxx,” comments Ian.

The Council can now produce reports on Internet activity much more quickly and easily drill down on specific users, Websites, and so on.

“We download the previous day’s reports every day and produce departmental reports every month. Sometimes we’re asked to produce individual reports on a daily or weekly basis and Bloxx allows us to do this very easily.”

The Bloxx Web content filter has made this part of IT’s job a lot easier, as Ian explains:

“The number of helpdesk support calls we now receive about Web filtering has reduced significantly. It’s much faster and easier to create reports compared to our previous solution, and it’s very easy to recategorize or allow access to specific Websites if we need to.”

“The Bloxx UK Support Team is very responsive and I have a single point of contact for Support, maintenance contract renewal and so on, which makes communication a lot easier.”

“Bloxx is an all-in-one solution that gives its customers advanced technology at a very competitive cost. Looking at all the problems our previous system caused us, and comparing it with our situation now we have Bloxx Web filtering, there’s no comparison, Bloxx is a definite winner,” concludes Ian. ■

About Bloxx

Bloxx supplies appliance-based web filtering, which uses the pioneering Tru-View Technology, to organisations in both the business and public sectors.

To find out more about Bloxx web filtering call us on +44 (0)1506 426 976, email info@bloxx.com or visit www.bloxx.com/demo to book an online demonstration.



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