

Providing a Hassle-Free Solution to Protecting Children Online (Crowell Public Library, San Marino, California)

Profile

Crowell Public Library is located in San Marino, an affluent bedroom community 20 miles outside of Los Angeles that is known for its California Spanish architecture and popularity as a filming location. Serving as the sole library to a community of 13,500, Crowell Public Library (CPL) is an important resource for residents, providing access to over 75,000 books, lectures, classes, and public computers. Its mission is to provide *“a gathering place, an information center, a technology hub, and a book and media collection to serve the educational, cultural, and recreational interests of people of all ages.”*

Challenge

“We love the web interface. It's carefree. It doesn't require a lot of maintenance on our part; we just turn it on and it works.”

Irene E. McDermott
CPL Reference Librarian and Systems Manager

In accordance with American Library Association guidelines, the library maintains a strong commitment to free access to information. Adult patrons are allowed unfettered access to the Internet, however, library staff and the Board of Trustees determined that restrictions were necessary to prevent minors from viewing of adult and obscene content. “We're right by a junior high school and kids come over in the afternoon,” said Reference Librarian and Systems Manager Irene McDermott. Parents trust the library to provide a safe online environment for children.

To use the public computers, patrons log in to a PC reservation system using their library ID. Children and youth under 18 are only allowed to access one of 20 computers designated for their use. “We serve approximately 5,000-6,000 computer users each month, of which about half are children and young adults,” said McDermott.

Library administrators needed a content filtering solution to protect children from adult content online that was easy to install and simple to maintain. As a standalone library, CPL's needs were relatively simple. They required real-time content monitoring and filtering that was reasonably priced, configurable by library administrators, and provided industry-standard block lists in a software package that was easy to install and would provide hassle-free performance.

In order to maintain system integrity, all public computers are shut down each night and restored from a pristine image, wiping any malicious software or downloaded files. Administrators needed the ability to easily reinstall content filtering software during the re-imaging process.

CPL's requirements included the following:

- Software-Based Solution
- Industry-Leading Dynamic Content Filtering
- Constantly Updated Block Lists
- Proxy Site Prevention
- Peer-to-Peer/Instant Messaging Prevention
- Flexible Configuration Settings
- A Simple Administrator Control Panel

“We looked around at three or four commercial content filtering solutions,” said McDermott. “One was a server and router filtering configuration [but] it was too expensive and was more than we needed. It was going to be too much trouble to maintain.”

Solution

Administrators reviewed hardware and software solutions from several competitors, and determined that most hardware solutions required too much maintenance and that most software solutions cost too much. After months of research, CPL's computer consulting vendor suggested testing Net Nanny, which was perfect for the small library's limited needs.

"We were able to purchase Net Nanny at a reasonable price," said McDermott. "When Net Nanny [introduced] ContentProtect, we kept the same company and got the web-based solution."

ContentProtect Professional provides real-time content filtering protection on the World Wide Web, chat rooms, Usenet, instant messages, FTP, P2P sites, forums, adult sites, and social media sites. Administrators are able to quickly manage white and black lists to block pornography, gaming, gambling, and any other sites deemed inappropriate for user access. ContentProtect Professional is optimized to provide best-of-breed performance, monitoring everything in real-time without slowing down throughput. It seamlessly integrates with existing anti-virus software while providing daily updates to block lists so that computers are always up to date.

Enhanced reporting allows administrators to see visually where users are spending online time, quickly alerting them to new threats. With its industry-leading dynamic block lists, ContentProtect provides instant safety from proxy sites, used by tech-savvy teens to circumvent filtering restrictions. Proxy Guard not only filters the content of all web proxy sites (HTTP and HTTPS) but aggressively blocks attempts to get around content filtering by blocking these proxy sites.

Crowell Public Library is now able to selectively apply content filtering on a computer-level basis, upholding their civic responsibilities to adults while protecting young users from obscene content.

Result

"We love the web interface. It's carefree. It doesn't require a lot of maintenance on our part; we just turn it on and it works," said McDermott. "Kids are kept on the straight and narrow and we don't have to worry about it. We trust ContentWatch."

Parents and community members are pleased with CPL's balance of free speech and child safety. Administrators are able to easily manage their white and black lists through the web interface, quickly responding to new threats, and monitoring usage. Recently, staff became aware of a new chat site, where teens had been interacting with adults online. Administrators were able to instantly shut off access to the site through ContentProtect's web interface.

The library was able to save money on computer consulting hours by using a solution that was turnkey. "We only interact with ContentProtect when we need to manually add a new blocked site," said McDermott. "[We interact] maybe once or twice a year."

About Crowell Public Library

Crowell Public Library is located in San Marino, California, a wealthy bedroom community in Los Angeles County. A standalone library, it provides residents with access to its collection of over 75,000 books, as well as services such as lectures, classes and use of public computers. CPL has 17 full-time employees and serves between 5,000 and 6,000 patrons each month.

For more information, visit: <http://sanmarinopl.org/>

About ContentWatch, Inc.

ContentWatch has been delivering Internet security solutions for consumers and businesses since 2001. With the emergence of mobile devices, ContentWatch's mission is to integrate its suite of solutions, including Net Nanny, from the desktop and networks to all platforms in the mobile market. For more information, please visit <http://www.contentwatch.com>.

For more information visit www.contentwatch.com or follow [www.twitter.com/netnanny](https://twitter.com/netnanny) on Twitter.

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