

Customer Success | Case Study

School: Brainerd ISD

State: Minnesota

District Size: 7,000 Students

Solution: Total Traffic Control

Focus: EVL, Antivirus, Filtering, Reporting

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Pam Dyson,
Director of Media Technology,
Brainerd ISD



Brainerd ISD Finds a Balance Between Education and Security with Lightspeed Systems

Overview

Brainerd ISD in Minnesota is trying to accomplish a lot over its school network. Managing more than 3,000 computers (2,000 PCs and Macs and 1,200 thin clients), two separate networks (a private one, and one for guests), two Internet connections, and eleven buildings could overwhelm the small IT team and push to the sideline bigger-picture issues—like providing safe access to valuable educational resources online. But Brainerd has found a single solution that simplifies solving the day-to-day network management issues and helps make the network a more valuable educational tool.

Challenge

The problem the network administrators faced was that they didn’t know what the problems were. Jon Scheler, IT software/hardware technician for the district, explains: “We had no insight into who was using the network, what they were using it for, or where they were going. We needed to get a handle on what was going on on the network.”

The district sought out a new filtering solution that had updated features and reporting, which their previous solution lacked, so that they could better understand their network usage—and thereby better manage it.

Solution

The IT department at Brainerd selected Lightspeed Total Traffic Control, which offered much more than a filtering and reporting solution by combining filtering, antivirus, spam management, email archiving, and bandwidth management into a single solution. The benefits of a comprehensive solution were immediately clear: “With one user interface, administrators can access the information they need with just one touch,” shares Pam Dyson, director of media technology for the district. “They don’t have to learn as many interfaces, or log into multiple programs. It saves a lot of time.”

Total Traffic Control gave Brainerd just what it needed: comprehensive information about who, when, where, why, and how the network was being used. And all of that information is presented in easy-to-understand reports. “We discovered where our network usage was coming from, identified the top users, top emailers, and more. This helps us manage our network and make sure bandwidth is available for education-critical users and resources,” Jon says. Pam adds: “And we can customize reports the way we want them and can create a PDF snapshot to send to discipline officers if we find something inappropriate. It alleviates a lot of issues.”

The content filter of Lightspeed Total Traffic Control, Web Access Manager, offers time-saving benefits of its own. “Other filters are made for home use, or business use. Because Web Access Manager is made specifically for schools, its database is suited to our needs. We spend a lot less time reviewing sites and customizing allow and block lists,” Pam shares.

Plus, Web Access Manager does more than just filter inappropriate content. It offers an intelligent solution to web filtering that has helped Brainerd meet teacher demands for access to Web 2.0 sites, while still ensuring CIPA compliance.

“Most of our teachers think YouTube should be open all the way. But we have an obligation to be compliant with CIPA and ensure user safety. Before, we didn’t have a way to balance educators’ needs with our requirements,” remembers Pam. “Now, with the Educational Video Library feature, it’s so easy! Teachers get access to the videos they want, and we don’t have to worry because ads, comments, and links are stripped out.” (As part of the process, media specialists review and approve the videos teachers request.)

The Educational Video Library is getting use throughout the district, from Driver’s Ed to social studies to science, where students watch videos of labs like dissections and biopsies. Pam shares that “everybody loves the Educational Video Library!” And though the district blocks social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter, they’re eager to find ways to safely incorporate participatory learning and collaboration into students’ education with new features like My Big Campus: “We were excited to hear about My Big Campus,” Pam remarks, “and can’t wait to discover how we can use it in our district.”

Brainerd uses Total Traffic Control for email archiving and spam blocking as well. And they have recently transitioned away from their previous antivirus solution to Lightspeed Security Manager, the antivirus component of Total Traffic Control. “We haven’t had any outbreaks since switching to Lightspeed for antivirus, and the insight into what’s going on security-wise on the network has definitely increased,” Jon says. “We submit anything that Security Manager doesn’t catch to Lightspeed’s Antivirus Strike Team, and they generally have a turnaround time of 1 to 2 hours before a virus definition and disinfect script is pushed out. The best part about it is that Security Manager requires no user interaction, and protects the computer without users knowing or doing anything.”

Conclusion

With a single solution, Brainerd filters web access, protects against viruses, archives email, blocks spam, manages network bandwidth, reports on network use and user activity—and provides safe access to valuable web resources, like YouTube videos. And they save time and money by doing it all with a single interface and a single cost-per-workstation.

Plus, users throughout the district are taking advantage of new features and discovering new uses every day: “With the Lightspeed Wiki, we can ask questions of other users and learn how they are using the product. It’s a really valuable tool! Usually when someone thinks there is a problem or something is missing from Total Traffic Control, it turns out that it’s just a lack of knowledge or understanding of how to use it.” With Lightspeed’s online and live-person phone support, that knowledge and understanding is always just a click—or a call—away.

About Lightspeed Systems

Lightspeed Systems Inc., founded in 2000, develops comprehensive network security and management solutions for the education market. We are committed to helping schools operate their networks effectively and efficiently, so educators can provide safe online teaching and learning environments.

Exceptional Service and Support

Our unparalleled service and support mean our solutions will continue to deliver, long after their easy implementation. With any Lightspeed Systems solution, you can depend on:

- 24/7 live-person phone technical support.
- Comprehensive online knowledge bases.
- The Lightspeed Wiki, rife with user collaboration and product expertise.

Professional Development & Training

Professional Services: We provide customized, collaborative professional development services to address your specific needs. For more information, please contact ps@lightspeedsystems.com

Training: To help you fully leverage your investment in Lightspeed Systems solutions, we offer an array of training options.

- Online introductory training and user demonstration videos.
- Administrator certification.
- Regional training throughout the U.S.

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Learn more about our products and services at www.lightspeedsystems.com

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See the powerful reporting, policy creation, and customization features of Total Traffic Control, and our component solutions, for yourself. Schedule an online demonstration: www.lightspeedsystems.com/demo

