

VÄSTRA GÖTALAND REGION

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

INDUSTRY:

Healthcare services

"We now have full control over internet use and are able to prioritise beneficial traffic. Inappropriate usage has also automatically decreased since we started checking traffic, because everyone knows what policies and systems are in place."

Leif Ytterström, Västra Götaland Region



Västra Götaland Region takes control of internet traffic

The Västra Götaland Region was formed in 1999 and is based on a union of the county councils of Skarborg, Älvsborg and Bohuslän, as well as a part of the city of Göteborg. The Region comprises 49 municipalities, just under 50,000 employees and a total IT budget of SEK 34 billion.

Most of the Region's employees work within the health care services sector. Other departments in the Region include the Göteborg Opera, Västragötland Museum and Västtrafik (public transport services). Among other technologies, the Region uses the internet to keep in touch with the general public, search for information and communicate with private health care providers and other suppliers.

The debate regarding copyright protection and file sharing on the internet intensified in 2004 due to new legislation. The debate prompted queries from business directors and interested politicians about the traffic on Västra Götaland Region's network.

"We were unable to answer questions regarding internet traffic with any clarity or granularity. We were able to measure volume, but had no means of knowing what it consisted of. It was then that we realised that we had to do something", says Leif Ytterström, responsible for Västra Götaland Region's network.

Traffic Analysis

In order to understand how their employees used the internet, the Region performed an analysis of the internet traffic across their network and was able to determine that a great deal was not work related. For example, they discovered peer-to-peer traffic which often involves illegal file sharing. Since legislation was made more stringent in 2005, both the distribution and downloading of copyrighted material are illegal.

They also found that there was traffic on gaming and pornography sites. In addition to being non-work-related, this type of traffic constitutes a security risk in itself since these websites require users to download programs that can contain various types of spyware and malware.

"The web is a tool that we offer employees because it is required for business. For this reason, the issue is not what should be allowed from a moral point of view – the boundary for approved usage is determined solely by what is relevant to operations", explains Leif.

For example, listening to the radio on the web for private use may well be an innocent activity, but at certain times it was using up to 40% of the network's capacity.

"The results of the traffic analysis showed us that we were losing huge amounts of bandwidth to non-work related activities and exposing our system to major security breaches – given the fact that we store very confidential and personal information on our patients we needed to address this immediately for the protection not only of our staff and systems but more importantly for our patients" says Leif.

Full Control

After receiving the results of the traffic analysis, the Region decided to acquire a web filtering software product. The challenge was to find a solution that could handle the complexity of a large organisation with many IT systems. The final criteria that settled the decision in favour of Websense were the solution's functionality and adaptability.

"With the Websense solution, it is possible to log and keep track of traffic by using a simple reporting function. Blocking traffic and updating filtering settings are also easy to manage," says Leif.

The Websense solution includes over 90 website categories, 80 protocols and 1.4 million applications. It is built upon the Websense database, which is the world's largest with over 15 million websites. This has had a significant effect on Region Västra Götaland.

For example, the health care services in the Region are now able to send X-rays over the network - a highly critical determining factor in making sure that the patient receives the right type and level of care in a timely manner. It is only possible to do this if the network's performance level is sufficiently high.

"We now have full control over internet use and are able to prioritise beneficial traffic. Inappropriate usage has also automatically decreased since we started checking traffic, because everyone knows what policies and systems are in place" says Leif.

Since the implementation of this solution we know that the system and our employees are now well protected from security risks. Leif believes that it is the employer's responsibility to ensure that employees do not inadvertently create security issues, and that employees have the right to be given clear guidelines and an IT system that supports acceptable use policies. The Region now has these in place.

About Websense

Websense, Inc. (NASDAQ: WBSN) is the worldwide leader of web filtering, and premier provider of web security and desktop security software. Websense software is preferred by leading Fortune 500 and FTSE customers, as well as government agencies and educational institutions. Websense software increases employee internet productivity and secures organizations from emerging internet threats by providing a proactive web security component that compliments traditional security solutions. Only Websense delivers flexible, integrated policy enforcement at the internet gateway, network, desktop and remotely with over 22 million seats under subscription, ranging in size from 100-person firms to many of the world's largest corporations.

Websense, Inc.
San Diego, CA USA
tel 800 723 1166
tel 858 320 8000
www.websense.com

Websense UK Ltd.
Chertsey, Surrey UK
tel +44 (0)1932 796300
fax +44 (0)1932 796601
www.websense.co.uk

Australia
websense.com.au

Italy
websense.it

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