



“Lincoln Christ’s Hospital School urgently needed an effective web filtering solution to protect pupils’ safety and staff accountability.”

Trevor Batten IT Systems Manager, LCHS

21st century web protection for historic school

Lincoln Christ’s Hospital School has a history dating back to the 11th Century, but providing safe Internet access for both pupils and staff is very much a 21st Century issue. Since 2005, the school has made use of CensorNet web security and content filtering software to provide complete control of web access and content.

School history

Lincoln Christ’s Hospital School (LCHS) is a large comprehensive school in Lincolnshire, England for around 1400 pupils aged eleven to eighteen years. The school has enjoyed Language College status since 2001 offering teaching in French, Spanish, German, Mandarin Chinese and Russian and became an academy in September 2011. The modern school was formed in 1974 from the merger of two Grammar schools (Lincoln Boys’ School, founded in 1090 and Lincoln Christ’s Hospital Girls’ School, founded in 1893) and two Secondary Modern Schools (St Giles and Myle Cross, both established in 1933).

Internet safety at LCHS

In 2005, LCHS installed CensorNet Professional web security and content filtering software as part of its duty of care to ensure that the internet environment accessed on the premises is safe for both pupils and staff. Installed initially with 100 licenses for the school’s 250 computers, the software provided control of web content and prevents access to inappropriate and illegal web-based content.



Customer

Lincoln Christ’s Hospital School and Specialist Language College



Industry

Education



Challenge

Lincoln Christ’s Hospital School needed an effective web filtering solution to protect pupils’ safety and staff accountability.



Solution

CensorNet Secure Web Gateway

CensorNet Professional fulfilled all the requirements of the school, and very importantly was accredited to the rigorous requirements laid down by BECTA, the government agency responsible at the time for the promotion and integration of information and communications technology (ICT) in education. Since 2005, the software has been automatically upgraded and has now been renamed CensorNet Secure Web Gateway. The school's complement of laptop and desktop computers has grown to 600, with a computer available in each classroom, and the rest in various locations including the library and IT suites. LCHS now has 300 CensorNet licences.

CensorNet Secure Web Gateway

CensorNet Secure Web Gateway is a web security and content filtering proxy with a host of features that allow schools to control all aspects of web access quickly and effectively. These include:

- Accurate blocking of offensive and unsuitable websites – based on a database of 100+ million known sites
- Blocking anonymous proxy servers (anonymisers)
- Real-time Image Filtering to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)
- Bandwidth use reporting and policy scheduling
- A complete audit trail of web activity is available to allow full accountability.

LCHS web policies

LCHS adheres to all of the original BECTA guidelines for internet safety, supplemented by additional recommendations from Lincolnshire County Council. Five discrete web access policies have been set up for different groups within the school. These are for: Students (Years 7-11); Sixth Form (Years 12-13); Staff; Guests; Facebook User Group.

Only the Facebook User Group, whose members are responsible for social and pastoral care is allowed access to Facebook, as they may need to investigate instances of online bullying. Access to proxy servers is blocked to prevent anonymous web activity. The student group is also not allowed access to YouTube to minimise possible time-wasting, although staff and Sixth Form do enjoy that privilege.

“Students are naturally inquisitive and will look for ways to ‘beat the system’ but CensorNet successfully thwarts any attempts to get round the controls, even using anonymous proxy servers, further ensuring that only appropriate content can be accessed!”

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A special 'Advisory' mode allows certain users to override blocked pages if they deem them acceptable for school work purposes. This is particularly relevant for content from foreign language sites which frequently appear in searches given the language status of the school. Any 'suspect' site is automatically blocked, pending review by the IT Department.

Accommodating students' own devices

For those who bring their own laptops and tablets into school, LCHS provides the web filtering protection via a separate 'BYOD' (Bring Your Own Device) VLAN. By having the BYOD network separate from the main school and staff network, any activity that takes place on BYOD is isolated from the rest of the system. So if someone brings a laptop in from home that has a virus, it won't impact the main school network. As an additional layer of security these BYOD devices are also routed through CensorNet for web security scanning.

“CensorNet has provided a great return on investment for the school. The software has been upgraded through two new versions since it was installed at no extra cost, and has allowed us to develop and adapt our school policies as our computer network has grown and new internet challenges arise. We have also enjoyed excellent customer support throughout the whole period.”

Trevor Batten IT Systems Manager, LCHS

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