



Overview

Industry

- Education / State University

Challenges

- Students violated network policies prohibiting illegal downloads
- Administration received on-going “take-down” notices from the music industry
- Previously installed network device was overwhelmed by some P2P applications
- Compliance was hard to manage
- Violators were hard to trace
- Network bandwidth was negatively impacted

Solution

- Block illegal P2P content with the CopySense® Network Appliance

Benefits

- Blocks illegal file trading while allowing legitimate P2P use
- Frees administration from take-down notice overhead
- Identifies violators without intruding on privacy
- Regains lost bandwidth

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Central Washington University

Administration at Central Washington University was challenged to enforce its Authorized Use Policy against illegal P2P music downloads. A stream of legal “take-down” notices was arriving from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). Now, with the CopySense® Network Appliance, Central Washington does their part to comply with the law, and the university has further reclaimed bandwidth for legitimate network uses.

“With the CopySense Appliance, we don’t have to make the draconian decision to turn off all P2P use. Students can still use P2P, but now we’re enforcing policies against illegal downloads. That also helps prevent RIAA take-down notices.”

– Chris Timmons, Network Engineer

With an enrollment of almost 9000 students, Central Washington University (CWU) in Ellensburg, Washington provides a range of liberal arts bachelors and masters programs, including education, business, sciences and the arts. Less than two hours driving distance from Seattle, CWU is positioned with pristine views of the eastern slopes of Mt. Rainier and other Cascade Mountain Range peaks, as well as proximity to a host of outdoor recreational activities.

CWU administration provides students an Authorized Use Policy for the university network, which includes restrictions against downloading illegal copyrighted material. However, CWU had no way of enforcing the policy. Administration still had to take action on RIAA notices and search out violating student file sharing on the network. Although CWU was using a Packeteer PacketShaper, this network device suffered from several limitations.

The PacketShaper was being used in an attempt to put a bandwidth limit on P2P transactions. While it could have also blocked P2P transactions it recognized, CWU knew it would have been extremely unpopular with students to block P2P altogether. Unfortunately, PacketShaper’s bandwidth limiting did nothing to prevent illegal downloads. Further, PacketShaper was unsuccessful in limiting the entire range of P2P applications available. According to CWU network engineer Chris Timmons, “Some of the newer P2P clients aren’t recognized by Packeteer. These clients are overly aggressive and will overwhelm the PacketShaper box. They also generate a lot of new sessions which impacts network performance.”

Another administration concern was to avoid being in a position of eavesdropping on students’ network transactions to locate violators. Timmons reports, “the CopySense Appliance recognizes P2P transactions that PacketShaper doesn’t, and it provides a way to manage P2P without being invasive.”

CWU is using the CopySense Appliance in a mode where it allows legitimate P2P transactions but blocks illegal downloads, matched to electronic signatures in a database of songs provided by the music industry. In this mode, when the CopySense Appliance senses an illegal trade, it blocks the transfer between P2P clients. It has no effect on downloads which are purchased legitimately on the Internet.

CWU also extracts from the CopySense Appliance a report that locates illegal download attempts. With this report, administrators don’t have to look at network content, but a violation attempt can be flagged. The university then provides a gentle reminder to the user about network policy. According to Timmons, “We’re honest with users that we’re trying to prevent illegal downloads. Faculty and students have been supportive because performance has returned to the network. Previously with RIAA notices, performance issues and P2P spyware on student computers, it was a cycle of despair all around.”

Timmons gives the CopySense Appliance high marks. “It’s straightforward to set up and update, it responds to more P2P clients than PacketShaper, and it’s a good solution that respects privacy. Besides that, Internet bandwidth is one of the most expensive parts of network performance. The CopySense Appliance is a small investment to get that back.”