



Texas A&M University-Kingsville

Administration at Texas A&M University-Kingsville was concerned about illegal file trading on their network and wanted to pro-actively avoid any challenges from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). Upon further inspection, they found P2P applications were consuming campus network bandwidth and were a key contributor to spreading viruses. Now the university prevents all P2P use with the CopySense® Network Appliance.

“P2P causes a big headache for IT and makes the network a nightmare to maintain. We’re in a lot better shape after installing the CopySense Network Appliance.”

–Val Ramirez, Associate Director of Computing and Information Services

Overview

Industry

- Education / State University

Challenges

- Administration wanted to prevent illegal copying and avoid issues with the RIAA
- Previously installed network device was inadequate for the task
- P2P use was consuming network bandwidth
- P2P applications were rampantly spreading viruses

Solution

- Block all P2P transactions with the CopySense™ Network Appliance

Benefits

- Blocks illegal file trading from the widest range of P2P applications
- Reduces administration overhead associated with P2P nuisances
- Regains lost bandwidth
- Prevents viruses spread by P2P applications
- Allows IT to utilize more firewall ports

Texas A&M University-Kingsville is one of nine universities in The Texas A&M system. Located near the Gulf of Mexico coast in Southern Texas, Texas A&M University-Kingsville serves 6500 students with a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs, including engineering, business and agriculture.

Val Ramirez, Associate Director of Computing and Information Services reports that Texas A&M University-Kingsville first attempted to manage P2P on their 4000-node network with the PacketShaper product from Packeteer. The PacketShaper, primarily a general-purpose bandwidth-shaping device, was unsuccessful in recognizing and blocking many P2P protocols and transactions.

Ramirez had also been battling an increasing number of viruses on his network, and many were suspected to have entered the network via P2P. The worst of the viruses had launched denial-of-service attacks. On several occasions the entire campus network had to be disabled while the infected computer was identified and isolated.

“We brought the CopySense Appliance in for evaluation,” said Ramirez, “and we immediately saw that it does what it claims to do.” Applied first in a monitor-only setting, the CopySense Appliance logged P2P transactions that were getting past the PacketShaper. Ramirez also discovered that not only students were generating P2P traffic, but faculty and staff were participating as well.

Through a simple but secure web browser interface, the CopySense Appliance was then set to block all P2P transactions. Any attempts to upload or download via P2P anywhere on the network were blocked. According to Ramirez, “Our virus problem diminished dramatically. This has bought us time to implement additional anti-virus procedures and then we’ll re-open legitimate P2P use, narrowing the restrictions from blocking all P2P to just blocking copyrighted material.”

The CopySense Appliance supports legitimate P2P use by offering a mode where only copyrighted material is blocked. Each P2P transaction is checked against a database of electronic signatures. Signatures matching a registered “do not copy” file list are blocked. The Audible Magic registry contains over 3.7 million works supplied by the entertainment industry and is updated weekly.

Ramirez reports, “Now we’re in a lot better shape. We’ve precluded all RIAA issues, we’ve regained bandwidth, and we’re managing our virus problem.” Ramirez additionally indicates that he’s been able to open firewall ports that were closed during their previous effort to block particular P2P applications.

Ramirez has received few calls from former P2P users who have been shut down. “If we get a inquiry, we respond with our no-copyright-infringement policy.” Incoming students and staff also get a policy statement as part of their orientation package.

Overall, Texas A&M University-Kingsville is pleased with the CopySense Appliance. Positive results have been reported to the Information Resources Manager, the Provost and the President. Ramirez said, “We’re glad we have this kind of measure in place. This will do good for us.”

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