



Wittenberg University

The Student Senate at Wittenberg University approached the Computing Services Department regarding poor network performance in residence halls. When they learned the performance problem was due to P2P file trading, the Student Senate voted to block illegal trading. Wittenberg has now added the CopySense Network Appliance® as a complement to their Packeteer PacketShaper to control P2P usage.

“Twice in the past year, P2P traffic took our network bandwidth down to zero. Now with the CopySense Appliance the issue is resolved, and that’s just by blocking illegal trading.”

– Joe Deck, Director of Computing Services

Overview

Industry

- Education / University

Challenges

- P2P use was dramatically impacting network performance
- Administration received weekly “take-down” notices from the music industry
- Previously installed network device was ineffective to some P2P applications
- Compliance was hard to manage
- Students voted to block illegal trading

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
- Regains lost bandwidth
- Easy to use and manage
- A good complement to Packeteer’s PacketShaper

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Wittenberg University in Springfield Ohio offers over 50 liberal arts and sciences under-graduate and graduate degree specialties, including programs in medicine, law, theology, engineering, foreign language and accounting. With about 2200 students and located in a city of 65,000, Wittenberg offers a quality education in a small city setting.

Wittenberg had been reacting to about one notice per week from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), which each demanded removal of illegal files traded by P2P users. At that point, Wittenberg’s procedure was to track down the violator and have them remove the software used to download and serve illegal files. If there were repeat offenses, the violator was then denied network access.

In a further attempt to control the problem, Wittenberg installed a Packeteer PacketShaper, which acts to limit bandwidth for application protocols it recognizes. However, because the PacketShaper wasn’t recognizing several new P2P applications, the problem continued to be large enough on occasion to consume all available network bandwidth.

Students complained about poor network performance. When the Student Senate learned that illegal trading on P2P was the culprit, they voted to block this type of traffic. The vote was unanimous. Director of Computing Services Joe Deck reports, “The Student Senate decided that illegal trading didn’t fit student desires for the University mission. Not all P2P trading is illegal, but the vast majority of it is.”

Joe was happy to discover the CopySense Network Appliance in an article reported by the Chronicle of Higher Education. Particularly appealing was the fact that the CopySense Appliance can uniquely block illegal P2P transactions, based on a database of electronic signatures developed in cooperation with the entertainment industry. When operating in this mode, legitimate P2P transactions can continue unaffected while offending transactions are blocked. “This is important,” said Joe, “because some students are using P2P for legitimate learning purposes. For example, they might share poetry they’ve written.”

Joe sees the CopySense Appliance acting as a good complement to the PacketShaper. According to Joe, “They work very well together. The PacketShaper lets us shape bandwidth to mission critical services, and the CopySense Appliance keeps P2P from choking us out. The CopySense Appliance tells us what P2P protocols are being used and offers much more granularity. On top of that, the CopySense Appliance keeps us legal.”

Joe also likes the fact that the CopySense Appliance is easy to use and manage. “It gives us control without taking a lot of time and energy. We’re a small school with a small IT staff. It’s a big plus just to turn the CopySense Appliance on and not mess with it.”

Now that illegal trading is under control, Joe is no longer receiving RIAA “take down” notices, and he has even received kudos from students. “In this job I usually get complaint mail for almost everything we do. After installing the CopySense Appliance, at least half the mail was thanks and praise. That’s a new record!”