

Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow Chooses Trend Micro™ Enterprise Security to Protect K-12 Learning Environment

Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) has graduated more students than any other e-school and continues to pioneer innovative curriculum and technology. ECOT's online education is made up of highly qualified teachers, a broad range of online courses, and an enterprise-class, secure learning environment.

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— Brad Scott, IT Manager
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KEY BENEFITS

- **Better protection.** Better zero-day protection and reduced web threats (secure HTTP, HTTPS, and FTP traffic) minimize disruptions to learning and shield students from inappropriate content.
- **Less complexity.** Integrated multilayered defense and centralized console streamline administration and support.
- **Virtualization.** Virtual appliance solutions offer increased efficiency, scalability, and manageability.
- **Visibility.** IT gains insights about user behaviors to enable better security policy definition and enforcement.

SECURING ONLINE CLASSROOMS

Recognizing that some students learn more effectively outside of traditional classrooms, the educators at the Educational Service Center in Lucas County, Ohio sponsor one of nation's most popular online K-12 schools. The tuition-free alternative to “brick and mortar” schools connects certified teachers with students over broadband Internet connections.

ECOT's IT team is responsible for enabling and managing the school's virtual classrooms. Just like their counterparts that manage systems and networks on campuses, ECOT technology experts treat security as a high priority. A couple of years ago, escalating zero-day attacks led to an evaluation of alternatives for endpoint security.

“Symantec ended up offering us less protection for more money—this was a big motivation to switch vendors,” said Brad Scott, head of the IT organization at ECOT. “The heuristic protection offered by our Symantec solution was not good, and the software was also difficult to manage. We didn't have the ability to gain insight into what was happening on our network. By switching to Trend Micro™ Enterprise Security solutions, we've gained better protection and better visibility of overall security. We've been able to identify and control many threats that were invisible with Symantec. Now we only get a handful of threats that require attention and we're able to deal with them quickly.”

CHOOSING THE BEST SOLUTION FOR MULTIPLE POINTS ON THE NETWORK

ECOT's security replacement project started with endpoint protection and a new security management platform:

- Endpoint security (Trend Micro™ OfficeScan™ Client-Server Suite)
- Security management (Trend Micro™ Control Manager™)

With the new endpoint security solution successfully deployed, ECOT IT next tackled an out-of-date web security solution. The existing Microsoft™ Internet Security & Acceleration (ISA) 2000 server was in desperate need of an upgrade, and ECOT needed to consider what filtering capabilities were required to adequately protect students on the web. In addition to upgrading to the latest ISA solution, ECOT IT looked at WebSense, Trend Micro, and other alternatives.



“Our previous success with Trend Micro Enterprise Security encouraged us to consider Trend Micro for web protection,” said Scott. “We also considered WebSense, but Trend Micro had the best value proposition. When we added up overall features and cost, it all pointed to the Trend Micro™ InterScan™ Web Security Virtual Appliance product. Another plus of choosing Trend Micro has been the synergy we gain from a single-vendor solution on endpoints and at the gateway.”

GAINING THE BENEFITS OF VIRTUALIZATION

Based on ECOT’s requirements, the virtual appliance form factor was especially attractive and easy to deploy within their VMware™ ESX™ server environment. “At ECOT, we are comfortable with our overall datacenter efficiency, but we only virtualize systems when we see a direct benefit,” said Scott. “When we looked at web security alternatives, and the amount of traffic we need to handle, we came to the conclusion that the virtual appliance would give us the best solution. Server utilization is always a big issue for us, considering the large number of students we support, and InterScan Web Security Virtual Appliance gives us efficiency in that regard, as well as scalability and manageability.”

PERSONALIZING WEB POLICIES AND SIMPLIFYING ADMINISTRATION

After using the virtual appliance for about a year, ECOT IT has benefited from its new-found insight into student behaviors. “InterScan Web Security Virtual Appliance is working great—it has given us insights into what sites students try to reach,” said Scott. “Students were able to circumvent our old solution by going to anonymous proxy sites on the Internet, but the Trend Micro solution has helped us prevent that and proactively identify what sites to allow and what to block.”

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— Jeff Miller, IT Analyst
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ECOT takes advantage of the ability to define web policies and blacklists based on user groups. “With InterScan Web Security, we can block some sites for students without restricting teachers and staff,” said Scott. “Being able to customize policies for different groups is a big help for ECOT IT. We can respond to unique needs based on curriculum requirements and the sensitivities of various student groups.”

Overall, the InterScan Web Security solution has saved time for ECOT IT. The group filtering capabilities and automatic blocking of malicious sites eliminates the time previously spent manually whitelisting websites. “Administration is now so much easier compared to our previous web security solution,” said Jeff Miller, an IT analyst at ECOT. “We spend about 80% less time supporting the Trend Micro InterScan Web Security Virtual Appliance, and have to handle far fewer manual interventions for website blacklists and whitelists—quite an improvement.”

Less time is also spent diagnosing web issues. “My team spends a lot less time troubleshooting web activity or figuring out why users can’t access allowed sites,” said Scott. “With InterScan Web Security, we don’t run into the quirks we routinely experienced with ISA. Trend Micro gives us a more resilient, enterprise-class security solution.”

MULTIPLE LAYERS OF WEB THREAT PROTECTION

The combination of Trend Micro endpoint and gateway solutions builds a multilayered defense for ECOT. These Trend Micro Enterprise Security solutions are part of a tightly integrated offering of content security products, services, and solutions. Powered by the Trend Micro™ Smart Protection Network™, they deliver immediate protection from emerging threats while greatly reducing the cost and complexity of security management.

“Symantec did not do a good job protecting us from malware,” explained Miller. “With Trend Micro, we now have three layers of protection that have dramatically cut down on viruses and malware. We have real-time scanning of all HTTP, HTTPS, and FTP traffic with InterScan Web Security Virtual Appliance. And with OfficeScan Client-Server Suite, we have scanning at the endpoints as well as web reputation protection in the cloud to block access to malicious sites. The combination of all these protections is great.”

IMPROVING MESSAGING SECURITY

When its mid-range Barracuda solution was found to be too expensive to upgrade, ECOT IT turned to Trend Micro for a messaging security replacement for the gateway. “The Trend Micro™ InterScan™ Messaging Security Virtual Appliance product exactly fit our needs,” said Tom Siehl, the server administrator at ECOT. “We didn’t lose any functionality by replacing Barracuda with Trend Micro, and we gained the cost efficiencies of a VMware Ready virtual appliance. InterScan Messaging Security Virtual Appliance gives us a solution that is easy to administer centrally, and Trend Micro is continually updating the product with new features.”

ENHANCED MONITORING AND REPORTING

ECOT’s newest Trend Micro virtual appliance also fits nicely into IT’s reporting practices. “Trend Micro Enterprise Security gives us an integrated reporting structure,” said Scott. “With the addition of InterScan Messaging Security Virtual Appliance, we can start managing email and spam just like we now manage web threats. We gain more visibility into user behaviors and we can streamline our administrative structure.”

ECOT will soon be able to gain additional insights into web behaviors with the introduction of Trend Micro Advanced Reporting and Management. The new module for InterScan Web Security solutions is currently being beta tested by ECOT. Advanced Reporting and Management will allow ECOT IT to gather and report more detailed information about student web activity. “Trend Micro Advanced Reporting and Management will let us see every person’s activity,” said Miller. “Since it transfers information from InterScan Web Security Virtual Appliance to the Trend Micro servers, it also frees up processing power for us, while giving us better visibility and control over security.”

CORPORATE PROFILE

Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow Columbus, Ohio

Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) is the first, largest, and most popular tuition-free online public school in Ohio, educating over 9,000 students in grades K-12. Founded in 2000, ECOT offers a flexible, tuition-free alternative to traditional “brick and mortar” public education. ECOT is fully accredited by the Commission on International Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA) and the North Central Association (NCA), and is certified by the Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools (OAPCS).

- **Industry/Vertical** K-12 Education
- **Employees** 604
- **Infrastructure** 604 internal employee PCs; 8,000–10,000 student remote PCs; 10,000 email addresses; 10,000 internet users
- www.ecotohio.org

TREND MICRO PRODUCTS

- **OfficeScan Client-Server Suite**
<http://us.trendmicro.com/us/products/enterprise/officescan-client-server-edition/index.html>
- **InterScan Web Security Virtual Appliance**
<http://us.trendmicro.com/us/products/enterprise/interScan-web-security-virtual-appliance/index.html>
- **InterScan Messaging Security Virtual Appliance**
<http://us.trendmicro.com/us/products/enterprise/interScan-messaging-security-virtual-appliance/index.html>
- **Trend Micro Control Manager**
<http://us.trendmicro.com/us/products/enterprise/control-manager/>
- **Trend Micro Enterprise Security**
<http://www.trendmicro/go/enterprise>
- **Trend Micro Smart Protection Network**
<http://www.smartprotectionnetwork.com>



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