

Ensuring Safe Web Access in Academic Institutions

Education was one of the first places the internet made a difference to, and ever since, some of the most amazing innovations using the internet have happened in the field of academics. Whether it is online research, easy access to rare publications, or webinars with experts from other places, the internet has entirely revolutionized the way education progresses.

That change is evident right from the school level, as K-12 education has entirely gone online. Over the coming years, the dependence on the internet will only increase, and with that come a whole new range of threats. Already we have been facing serious threats in the form of viruses, malware, adware, unsuitable viewing material, and identity theft. Experts say that this problem is only going to get bigger, but the good thing is that we are all wiser to the challenge today.

Ensuring a safe internet environment in educational institutions is a mammoth challenge, and one major step in that direction was taken in December 2000, when the Congress passed the Children's Internet Protection Act law. Using that as the cornerstone, academic institutions – right from Kindergarten to University level have made sweeping changes in the way the internet is accessed and used in their environs. However, that has not eliminated the challenges. Each time there is a solution, the challenge is modified to become more stubborn. Here are a few of those

More Complex Malware

With our anti virus programs and anti malware applications becoming stronger, people creating these rogue software are also becoming wiser. Instead of just writing a code that will wreak havoc on the user's PC, hackers are writing intelligent code which is designed to either steal personal data of the users; or use establish a remote connection so that they can do it directly! Key loggers, Trojans, Compromised websites and all other new-age threats are a more complex form of Malware.

IM

Instant Messaging has been around right from the inception of the internet, and has grown with the growth of the internet. With increased bandwidth, P2P messengers and Instant Messengers with large file transfer capability have taken over the available bandwidth in several academic institutions. Most of these file transfers are not for purposes the network is intended to, and they occupy most of the available resources, leading to a crunch for people who do genuine work. Several institutions have been hit with copyright lawsuits – music, movies, software, books, there is no limit to what can be transferred through IM today.

Negative Usage of Social Networks

A significant percentage of social networking users exist with the sole purpose of criminal intent. The proliferation of social media and networks into educations institutions has made it quite easy for predators to lay bait and victimize young students. The papers are full of such happenings, but we are not wiser yet. Cyber bullying, online stalking and other forms of cyber crime have taken root in our society and need a big push to go out.



Installing web content filtering software is the solution the CIPA has come up with, and most experts agree. Controlling access from hundreds and thousands of users is a task which is easier said than done, and unless there is a strong system in place that can filter as per the recommendations of the educational institution, these challenges are not going away. However, there is another threat – even if there is a web content filtering system installed by the institution

Anonymous Proxies

Many web content filtering systems don't have the capability to detect and block proxy access. Students of today are pure genius, and they will find a way around anything the management puts in place. Accessing the internet through an anonymous proxy will negate the controls set in place by the content filtering system, and many students do that anyway.

However, all these challenges have one solution – **Wow Filter**.

Wow Filter is CIPA Compliant, and has the most robust filtering algorithm in the world. The free content filtering box can just be added to an educational institution's computer network, and the administrator can choose the level of security he wants to give to different user groups. Based on their access level, sites will automatically be filtered in or out, and each activity from each user is recorded and can be brought up instantly as and when needed. In addition, Wow Filter has a very strong code, which detects any attempt to bypass the existing network – by means of proxies or any other creative methods – and stops the users right there. Nothing can get past the strong security protocols of Wow Filter. Nothing.

Schools and Libraries in all 50 states are using Wow Filter's free web content filtering program to create a safe browsing environment for their users. You can learn more at www.wowfilter.com and get your own customized content filtering system for free too.

