

Case Study

Sandwich Technology School

Recently honoured with Technology College status, Sandwich School is constantly seeking better ways to use new technology.

This most technologically-minded of schools revolves around a NetPilot secure appliance, which provides secure and cost-effective Internet access and email for all networked PCs.

For Sandwich School, the key benefits of the NetPilot are the comprehensive inbound and outbound user access controls, which include restrictions by individual, group and time, along with web access controls such as blacklists (blocking specific undesirable sites) and whitelists (blocking everything and enabling certain sites).



NetPilot
Internet Security

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At a time when schools and colleges across Britain are rapidly improving their ICT credentials, Sandwich Technology School stands out from the crowd. The school's 300 networked computers are used for a variety of cross-curricular activities, all staff use laptops for electronic registration and broadband Internet access is via 2MB fibre optic connection. Not bad for a non-commercial organisation.

With such a progressive attitude to embracing e-learning and encouraging the use of computers by pupils and staff, it is no surprise that the school's network manager, Robert Draper, opted for an integrated, all-in-one solution to ensure Internet access and email for every networked PC from NetPilot Internet Security..

"NetPilot controls all email and Internet access," says Robert Draper. "During its first year of use, it has proved itself very reliable and it is simplicity itself to manage."

Robert (pictured, front) says that the school has always been technology-minded – indeed, it was recently awarded Technology College status – and when they first started looking at comprehensive Internet access they wanted to get it right first time. "We thought about building our own solution from separate components but that didn't prove feasible, so in the end an ISP contact recommended NetPilot."

NetPilot reseller Access IT supplied the school with the latest NetPilot, which is a more powerful version of the original NetPilot Internet server appliance, necessary because of the future high-capacity email needs of Sandwich Technology School. NetPilot is a compact, rack-mountable, fit and forget device with extremely high levels of security, control and resilience.

An Advanced School Sandwich's commitment to technology is pronounced. In addition to the 300 networked computers, there are 50 laptops assigned as part of Microsoft's AAL initiative and a further 80 laptops used by staff for electronic registration. These are all linked to the network via a wireless system.

A current initiative involves setting up a wireless link to a local junior school. As part of this project, 40 Psion netbooks are capable of being wireless connected through an on-site Citrix server. This thin-client technology enables the netbooks to use full-blown

Office applications as well as surf the Internet using Internet Explorer. In turn, the local junior school has 20 netbooks and can access Sandwich Technology School's Citrix server via the wireless link.



The plan is for advanced skills teachers at Sandwich to teach children at the junior school remotely, using interactive whiteboards at both schools so that they can talk to each other over the wireless link complemented with audio visual feedback techniques at both ends.

"We are constantly looking at better ways to use new technology," adds Robert Draper. The use of NetPilot sprang from this desire to make the most of new technology by rolling out Internet access and email for all users.

Latest Generation NetPilot
NetPilot is a neat and easy way of providing Internet access and email facilities for all networked PCs within an organisation. Developed for larger organisations with up to 500 users, NetPilot more benefits over the original NetPilots while also adding capacity and extra resilience.

As well as offering email serving, routing, web-, file- and print-serving, caching and multi-user web access capabilities, NetPilot also provides a Checkmark-accredited firewall for the highest levels of network security. A range of WAN and LAN options are available, installation is straightforward with a browser-based management interface and a Wizard for automatic configuration of client PCs, and added resilience is available through swappable, twin-mirrored disk drives.

Among the key benefits for Robert Draper are the inbound and outbound user access controls, which include restrictions by individual, group and time, along with web access controls such as blacklists (blocking specific undesirable sites) and whitelists (blocking everything and enabling certain sites).

"NetPilot has been particularly good for spotting people who are abusing the system by either downloading restricted material or visiting chat rooms and user groups," he says. "Anyone caught doing this will be barred from accessing the Internet for a defined period. Usually, however, just the threat of being able to track misuse is deterrence enough for most people."

He adds, "In a sense, the whole school revolves around NetPilot Enterprise and it has performed its duties excellently."

Jamie Pushman managing director of NetPilot, says, "NetPilot has proven itself in many environments and we have seen a particularly strong take-up in the educational sector, primarily because of the user controls, audit logs and a robust firewall for excellent network security."

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