

St. Benedict's Hospital

Health Services and Nursing School boost productivity with UserGate Proxy & Firewall



St. Benedict's Hospital is a Rural Health Facility providing curative and preventive health services to a poor rural population in Southeast Tanzania. The Hospital also regularly receives patients from North Mozambique.

The St. Benedict's Hospital Nursing School trains Registered Nurse/Midwives and Registered Nurse/Psychiatrists. Their yearly examination results rank among the highest in the country. Additionally, the school is in the process of adjusting its facilities to serve as a resource and continuous medical education center for the hospital and surrounding areas. To that end, the hospital library is integrated with the Nursing School, and a small, six-computer center was added to create a resource-center.

Situation

The hospital has about 300 employees and about 100 nursing students in one location. Only a few of those employees (about 20) use computers, but training will be provided for additional employees so that the number of network users will increase over time.

The hospital uses one server that functions as both a file server and Internet gateway. The server is running Windows Server 2003, while Windows XP is used for the clients. The server is connected to the Internet via a DSL connection (2048/512K) with a monthly download rate of 10GB.

Internet connectivity in Tanzania is very expensive and only a few people can afford to connect to the internet. The Health System in Tanzania is very challenged due to a lack of financial resources and understaffing. The shortage of information, whether in recent books, or in accessibility of electronic information, is a reflection of the struggle to provide services to a poor population. As a service provider in one of the most disadvantaged areas in the country, St. Benedict's Hospital is no exception.

Access to information is vital for the development of services, and quality improvements for those services. Without current information, people cannot adequately improve their knowledge and skills.

St. Benedict's Hospital specialists are trying to set up a system that makes information more easily available. Whereas books are often expensive and quickly outdated, electronic information is more easily renewable. Books, however, remain a precious possession. Therefore, the hospital is setting up a combination of electronic information and a printed library in one resource center with information stored on the computer network or available through the Internet.

Consequently, it is very important for the nursing students and employees to have the opportunity to use the Internet to access information. DSL Connection is restricted to 10 GB of traffic per month. The hospital cannot afford more, so a solution is needed that makes it possible to restrict Internet usage to only necessary downloads and resources.

Solution



To create a solution that could be integrated with existing network technology, provided highly secure access to Web resources, and was easy to deploy and manage, St. Benedict's Hospital turned to UserGate Proxy & Firewall from Entensys.

According to Piet Hein Meckmann, IT administrator of St. Benedict's Hospital, "UserGate is very easy to install, to administer, and to use – which is important in a small, resource-poor IT environment – but it is also very feature rich. It not only has useful basic functionalities, but also a lot of more advanced options, and integrates everything in a good way".

Currently, the most important feature for St. Benedict's Hospital is traffic management and the ability to define rules for content/URL filtering and traffic limitation. St. Benedict's Hospital technical specialists will also research options for antivirus and firewall protection.

With UserGate, it is now simple to manage Internet usage. Without UserGate, St. Benedict's Hospital employees encountered difficulties with ISP traffic limitation and broken connections. They are now able to define usage rules and monitor the remaining download volume.

UserGate allowed the hospital to improve its network structure. The hospital IT team bought a new server and switched to a new internet provider. They are currently expanding their network and computer classroom (resource center) in the nursing school; UserGate will be used company-wide.

Benefits

By implementing UserGate Proxy & Firewall, St. Benedict's Hospital IT specialists simplified their local network administration and Internet access, reduced the costs of Internet resource usage, and improved network security with enhanced authentication and management tools.

As a result, St. Benedict's Hospital students and employees are now able to develop and improve their skills, knowledge, and hospital services using Internet technologies without running into issues with the limitations of the DSL connection.

Features of traffic filtering in UserGate allow for setting limited access to different web resources. That helps greatly to prevent children in the hospital from accessing unwanted materials, including sexually-explicit images, violence, gambling, inappropriate advertising, and others.

"We should emphasize the successful integration of the different UserGate functionalities in an easy and user-friendly way," says Piet Hein Meckmann, IT administrator of St. Benedict's Hospital. "By implementing UserGate, we shared Internet access for our staff, protected our network, and improved our services."

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