

To: Ron Alles, City Manager
Eric Bryson, County Administrative Officer

CC: file

From: Art Pembroke

Date: 2/28/2011

Re: Internet Filtering – Personal Network Storage Sites

Over the past couple months I have had numerous requests to access some sights classified under the "Personal Network Storage" category of our web filtering software. The definition of that category is as follows:

Personal Network Storage (ns)

This category includes sites that allow users to upload folders and files to an online network server. Personal network storage is a valuable service allowing users to backup, share, edit, or retrieve files or folders from any Web browser. They do offer risks, such as proprietary or sensitive data can be uploaded outside a secured network, or offensive and illegal content may be stored and distributed.

Historically, we have blocked access to his category primarily because it provides a way around our filtering of unwanted file types (movies, etc.). Also, as noted in the definition above, it does have the potential to allow someone to put information out on the internet that maybe shouldn't be out there.

That being said, I am seeing a significant growth in the use of Personal Network Storage sites by groups who are government affiliated or working closely with governmental agencies. Sharon Haugens national Smart Growth association is one such entity. Law enforcement recently has also been blocked from accessing videos about their organization put together by outside entities for their review.

Currently we have the following "Groups" set up in the WebGateways for filtering:

Kiosk Machines

This group encompasses computers that have specific filtering set up based on the IP Address, regardless of who logs into it. There are sub groups in here for CJIN Terminals, Golf Course Computers, VirtualCashier Computers and LocalWebOnly.

Unauthenticated Users

This group encompasses any computers that do not have a Novell Client installed on them to authenticate to eDirectory. This covers mainly servers, but could also hit checkout laptops, etc. that are logged in locally and not authenticated to eDirectory.

URL Filtering (Where we all are at)

This group has sub groups under it for Block WebMail Only, BlockNothing and Default Filtering. This covers all of main users of the network. Anything that does not match any of the above criteria gets lumped into the "Default Filtering" group. Block WebMail and BlockNothing are assigned based upon eDirectory User ID's.

URL FILTERING GROUPS

"Default Filtering Category" - Blocks all items that are prohibited in our web filtering policy. This covers the majority of city and county employees.

"Block Web Mail Only" - Actually still blocks the following categories:

- Internet Radio/TV
- Instant Messaging
- Web mail
- Personal Network Storage
- Phishing
- Malicious Sites
- Anonymizers/Anonymizing Utilities
- Web Ads
- Spyware/Adware

"Block Nothing" - Actually still blocks the following categories:

- Internet Radio/TV
- Instant Messaging
- Personal Network Storage
- Phishing
- Malicious Sites
- Anonymizers/Anonymizing Utilities
- Web Ads
- Spyware/Adware

I would propose the following:

Remove Personal Network Storage from the Block WebMail and BlockNothing groups blocked sites.
Allow Director/Deputy Director level positions to be placed in the Block Webmail Only group without requiring City Manger/County Administrative Officer approval.

Rationale:

My feeling here is that we give the ability and corresponding responsibility for determining appropriate use and materials to the department head. It would also provide a method for staff who needs periodic access to these types of sites for legitimate work use to access the sites working through their department director or deputy. Once a file is accessed within our network it is still scanned by our anti-virus software so we are still protecting from virus or other malware.

I would like to have this as a discussion item for our next IT Steering Committee and IT Board meetings in April.