

Shepherd electric supply

Location:

Baltimore/Washington DC

Industry:

Manufacturing

Solution:

iPrism Web Security

Deployment:

Multiple Locations

Results:

iPrism Web Security was able to save Shepherd Electric money and valuable IT resources while delivering the comprehensive, self-contained solution they needed.

Shepherd Electric Supply Selects EdgeWave's iPrism Web Security to Replace Websense

Overview

Shepherd Electric Supply is an independent electrical distributor that boasts the distinction of being the oldest business of its kind in the Baltimore/Washington area, having been founded in 1892. With its initial emphasis on providing industrial supplies, Shepherd has expanded its offering in the last 30 years to include commercial construction products. Shepherd now has 200 employees at offices in three locations serving the Maryland, Washington DC and Virginia region.



The Challenge

Dawn Pumphrey is Shepherd's Systems Administrator, tasked with keeping the corporate network available and running smoothly and assuring that each employee has secure and productive Internet access regardless of his or her location. Shepherd had been using Websense as their Web security solution for the last two years, but had been encountering problems that were increasingly frustrating and time consuming. As a software-based solution, Websense required a dedicated server to host their product and a significant amount of IT time was devoted to managing it.

Pumphrey reports that several troublesome issues were evident from the beginning, particularly in trying to manage Web access for all three locations while making sure enough bandwidth as available to run Shepherd's proprietary distribution software. She explained, "The Websense solution was using so much bandwidth to operate, it was slowing down the network. Repeatedly, the Websense solution crashed and completely quit working – it even crashed during an upgrade. Each time, I would be forced to rebuild the database from the ground up, a remedy that took me an entire day to accomplish."

Having the ability to establish policies for different groups within Shepherd was a very important attribute. Pumphrey explained that the Websense solution did not offer an easy way to accomplish this task for the various groups within Shepherd that she needed to address.

Technical support was another area where Pumphrey says Websense came up short. "Websense Support was horrible. I would be on hold for hours and it would often take days for a problem to be resolved. I dreaded having to call the Websense support line."

The Solution

Clearly, Shepherd Electric needed to find a new Web Security solution. They required a solution that could accommodate all three locations without degrading their bandwidth availability. They also wanted a solution that allowed them to easily set

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Dawn Pumphrey
Systems Administrator
Shepherd Electric Supply

group policies and one that wouldn't require a lot of maintenance. A solution that offered responsive and efficient technical support would also be important.

Before deciding on iPrism Web Security, Pumphrey and her colleagues analyzed some competing solutions including Cisco and Barracuda. She explained, “We looked at Barracuda Networks as well as Cisco. Cisco was too expensive and didn't include the flexible reporting we needed. Barracuda also lacked a summary report per policy group that our management had been requesting.”

Shepherd chose iPrism Web Security, acquiring an iPrism appliance for each of its three locations. Since multiple iPrisms can be easily configured into a master / slave format, deploying the iPrism solution this way allowed traffic to be monitored at all three locations by separate appliances while still allowing centralized management. This was an easy resolution that relieved them of the bandwidth problems they had encountered with Websense. In addition, Pumphrey recognized an immediate advantage in deploying iPrism. “iPrism was a piece of cake to set up and took half the time I spent on the Websense deployment. In fact, it took us less time to set up and configure all three iPrism appliances in separate locations than it took to set up Websense in one location.”

Master Slave Deployment

Multiple iPrisms conform easily to a master/slave configuration by choosing one iPrism to be the master and assigning additional iPrisms as slaves. Shepherd Electric made the iPrism at their corporate headquarters the master unit while appliances at their other locations were designated as slaves. Using this arrangement, all iPrisms could be controlled through the central management console at the corporate location. They were also able to collect aggregate reports across their organization from the master iPrism.

No Bandwidth Degradation

Because traffic was being efficiently routed through each iPrism, they no longer experienced the latency and breakdown that the Websense solution had caused. Network availability was maintained and all employees had access to applications, email and other critical functions their business required.

Authentication and Group Policy Enforcement

Pumphrey was particularly pleased with iPrism's ability to authenticate via Active Directory with transparent methodology that allows you to delegate administration roles via group membership to privileges mapping, and manage user policies via group membership to profiles mapping. This helped Shepherd set policies easily for different groups, even in different locations and enforce those policies accurately across the company. Pumphrey noted another advantage to iPrism's authentication technology when they experienced problems with the T1 Internet connection at their main branch. “We were able to quickly disable authentication on the appliances at our branch locations so our outage did not affect their Internet usage.”

Application Controls

Pumphrey appreciates iPrism's ability to block unsanctioned application communications such as IM and P2P protocols because they not only erode productivity and drain bandwidth, they can open serious security gaps where bot-related malware and viruses can invade networks. According to her, “iPrism saves us time by blocking unwanted software instead of having to remove it later from the computers.” iPrism allows you to monitor and block IM and P2P applications such as Skype and FTP with a simple set-and-forget check box.

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Flexible Reporting

Being able to generate the management reports required from the IT department was of major concern to Pumphrey and her colleagues. iPrism's comprehensive on-box reporting was a significant improvement and Pumphrey is able to generate all the reports that Shepherd management had been requesting. "iPrism has saved us time because it's so quick and easy to get information out of it. I can now get the summary reports by Active Directory group that were not available from Websense or the other solutions we considered. We simply set up the reports to run automatically and iPrism emails them to the appropriate managers."

EdgeWave Technical Support

Pumphrey reports that now they are able to speak with an iPrism Technical Support representative within minutes, rather than waiting for hours or days for a problem to be resolved. "I have not had any problems with iPrism support. I have been able to talk to someone within minutes and get any issues I'm having or questions resolved quickly."

The Result

The benefits of switching to iPrism can be readily identified by Pumphrey and her colleagues:

Time/ Money Saved -- It took twice as long to deploy one Websense solution at Shepherd headquarters than it did to deploy iPrism's appliance-based solution at all three Shepherd locations. Day-to-day management is also significantly reduced with iPrism. Where it took Pumphrey four hours a week to manage the Websense solution, iPrism requires no management at all for weeks at a time. Also, the fact that iPrism is a completely self-contained solution offers more savings. With Websense, not only was the original acquisition price higher, but Shepherd had to dedicate a server to running their software. There were also additional costs associated with reporting. With iPrism, all the features she needs, including comprehensive reporting, are on-box and included in the purchase price. EdgeWave Technical Support is another area that provided savings to Shepherd. The cost of keeping a valuable IT professional on the line waiting for answers from technical support can be significant. iPrism's quick and expert response to issues has saved countless hours of costly IT staff time.

Network Efficiency and Application Availability – Now Shepherd has no worries that their missioncritical business processes will be impeded by the bandwidth degradation they were experiencing with Websense. No matter how much Internet traffic is generated by their three locations, iPrism's powerful h-Series appliances can handle the flow. The network runs efficiently among all branches, their proprietary distribution software remains available, and all employees are able to utilize the Internet for legitimate business purposes without incurring any latency.

Management Reporting – Without accurate and relevant reporting, it was impossible for management to assess how efficiently their Internet security solution was performing. iPrism gives Shepherd the ability to monitor employee Internet usage across all three locations and generate the timely aggregate reporting their managers require.

iPrism Web Security was able to save Shepherd Electric money and valuable IT resources while delivering the comprehensive, self-contained solution they needed.



From initial acquisition costs to deployment, authentication, policy enforcement and reporting, iPrism proved to be the flexible, easy-to-use and cost-efficient solution Pumphrey and her colleagues were seeking.

About Shepherd Electric Supply

Shepherd Electric Supply is the oldest independent wholesale electrical distributor in the Baltimore/Washington area. Ernest J. Fluharty and Henry A. Shepherd founded Shepherd Electric in 1892. At the onset, company sales generally involved dry cell batteries and other related items. Due to the giant surge in the use of electricity in the 1900's, Shepherd's business grew rapidly. At first, there was more emphasis on industrial products; however, over the last thirty years, there has been a shift to the commercial construction market. Shepherd Electric has moved four times for expansion and currently has three locations. The company is built around exceptional service and a very large inventory.

EdgeWave

4225 Executive Sq, Ste 1600
La Jolla, CA 92037

Phone: 858-676-2277

Fax: 858-676-2299

Toll Free: 800-782-3762

Email: info@edgewave.com

About EdgeWave

EdgeWave is a leader in the cyber security industry, delivering innovative, effective and efficient email and web security protection for thousands of business and government organizations. Our mission is to mitigate the risks you face in the real world, and support you in reducing the cost and complexity of protecting your organization in today's fast-changing security and risk environment.

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