



iboss Helps Pascagoula School District Secure its Diverse Mobile Users and Manage Bandwidth

Overview

The Pascagoula School District, located in the Gulf Coast Region of Mississippi, is home to 19 K-12 schools that serve 9,000 students and staff at 21 sites across the district. Network Supervisor Toby Bradley is responsible for managing the network and ensuring security, while supporting a diverse mixture of Windows, Mac, iOS, and Chromebook devices. The IT department was interested in replacing their existing Lightspeed Web Filter with a more advanced solution that would encompass all their BYOD users easily. They also wanted to better handle bandwidth loads to ensure network availability, and were interested in improving gateway threat defenses to protect their sensitive data. After evaluating a number of solutions, they chose the iboss Distributed Gateway Platform.



Organization

Pascagoula School District

Industry

Education

Location

Pascagoula, MS

Size

- 19 Schools
- 9,000+ Students & Staff

The Challenge

As with all districts, Pascagoula needed to maintain CIPA compliance by safeguarding access to the Internet so their schools could qualify for valuable E-Rate funds. They also wanted a solution that could scale to encompass all the students and devices on the network, without limiting network availability. They had been using Lightspeed but were increasingly dissatisfied with the results. As Toby explains, “Lightspeed had just released its next-gen version and many of the features we liked were deprecated. We needed something with better features to give us more visibility into our network traffic.” In addition, they wanted a solution that could better protect the growing amount of

private student and staff data against APTs and targeted attacks that are increasingly focusing on schools. And because the Pascagoula district network supports a wide mixture of devices, they needed a solution with flexibility and scalability. Another important factor was network performance and availability, considering the increased bandwidth demand incurred from so many mobile devices on the network. Finally, with their busy IT department, they needed a solution that would make integration and management less complex, so they could conserve IT resources.

The Solution

Pascagoula is pleased that they chose the iboss Distributed Gateway Platform to protect their networks, manage Internet access across the many schools in the district, protect all users both on- and off-prem, and streamline the authentication process to accurately enforce Web policies throughout the district. Some of the other advantages they cited include:

- **Visibility and Intuitive User Interface:** iboss visibility across the full Web stream, including all 131K data channels, has given Pascagoula more insight into their network traffic. They are also very happy with iboss’ intuitive user interface and comprehensive reporting, which has eased the burden of ensuring compliance and generating reports.
- **BYOD Management:** iboss has provided Pascagoula with better control over BYOD users by giving them access based on group profiles. The district is now able to accurately identify BYOD users by providing a captive portal that automatically binds devices to a network directory. This allows IT to apply group-based policies consistently, whether users are using wired or wireless devices.
- **Advanced Threat Defense:** Pascagoula is also using iboss to increase threat defense and data protection. iboss defends against APTs and zero-day threats and include features such as malware sandboxing, continuous infection monitoring and network anomaly baselining to shorten the time from infection to detection and dramatically reduce data loss.
- **Reporting and Analytics:** Fulfilling CIPA and the district’s cyber security policies requires comprehensive reporting that can accurately reflect all users, no matter how or when they are accessing the network. With iboss, Pascagoula is able to schedule management reports, easily drill down from district-wide views to individual users, and track events and threats in real-time with live dashboards, all accessed from a central management console.
- **Ease-of-Deployment and Better Technical Support:** In addition to iboss visibility and flexibility, Pascagoula is pleased with iboss Technical Support, which has proven far superior to their experiences with Lightspeed. The fact that they can rely on concierge access to an experienced security engineer was instrumental in streamlining the switch from Lightspeed. They have found iboss Support to be easily accessible and available whenever issues arise.

The Results

Pascagoula has experienced significant benefits since deploying the iboss Distributed Gateway Platform. The Bandwidth Optimization feature enables them to allow approved downloads and updates while still controlling traffic. As Toby commented, “In a K-12 environment, the first few days of school opening after a prolonged break generates a flood of updates. iboss’ bandwidth controls are invaluable for those days when Apple decides to dump another update, followed by three bug fixes in quick succession.” He went on to explain, “This feature has given us a very important capability because twice, Apple has released major iOS updates during state testing, when network availability was critical.”

Additionally, BYOD management features from iboss enable Pascagoula to allow teachers and select classes to have network access and makes certain all users are encompassed in their security policies. “By using iboss in the MAC Gateway mode, we track all non-

Active Directory devices on the network by their MAC address. This means we can tag allowed devices such as computer workstations, while non-allowed devices receive only guest privileges,” Toby said.

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Toby Bradley, Network Supervisor | Pascagoula School District
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About iboss

iboss has created the first and only Distributed Gateway Platform specifically designed to solve the challenge of securing distributed organizations. Built for the cloud, iboss leverages an elastic, node-based architecture that provides advanced security for today's decentralized organizations and scales to meet the ever-increasing bandwidth needs of tomorrow. The iboss Distributed Gateway Platform is backed by more than 100 patents and protects over 4,000 organizations worldwide, making iboss one of the fastest growing cybersecurity companies in the world.

To learn more, visit www.iboss.com or contact iboss at sales@iboss.com