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News

Peer-to-Peer File Sharing Struggles Intensify in Universities

20 Universities Get Relief from Peer-to-Peer File Sharing, Entertainment Industry WatchDogs, and Internal Bandwidth Clogs with Unique Appliance called PacketSure

What:

Twenty universities nationwide have been using a unique network security appliance called PacketSure to monitor and eliminate copyright and bandwidth uses caused by peer-to-peer (P2P) file-sharing applications such as KaZaA, Morpheus and Grokster. One university systems administrator revealed that the university received alerts from the Motion Picture Copyright Association stating that "Spiderman" was being provided for download by someone at the university. The university systems administrator disconnected that PC from the network, but a student could have easily moved to another computer to finish the job. PacketSure solved this issue. The university has received no alerts since installing PacketSure and access to P2P file-sharing applications has been closed.

Other universities have also experienced improvements. The University of Missouri, for instance, has saved \$50,000 in what was once used to compensate for lost bandwidth whereas Rockefeller University used PacketSure to reduce the hold peer-to-peer traffic had on its central staff and administrative network.

"At the time we installed PacketSure, file-sharing applications accounted for nearly 40 - 50 percent of traffic on the staff's network. PacketSure gave me clear numbers to quantify the amount of bandwidth peer-to-peer, file-sharing applications we're using," said Jens Matthes, Network Security Specialist at Rockefeller. "Using PacketSure to block staff access to KaZaA and monitoring for any clearly abusive users quickly resolved the problem."

Why:

P2P file sharing use among students puts universities at risk for multi-million dollar lawsuits by the entertainment industry as students' use of these applications have made universities into illegal distributors of copyrighted materials. Recently, these issues have escalated. In late November/early December 2002 alone, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) sent letters to more than 2,000 universities nationwide, asking universities to strictly manage this problem and implement disciplinary measures. Court hearings are now underway in California to discuss whether file sharing companies should be held accountable. The Associated Press reported that The U.S. Naval Academy seized computers from more than 90 students to weed out bootlegged music and movies.

Furthermore, recent technical developments within the most popular film and music downloading applications have made it more difficult for universities to manage this problem as new "tunneling" capabilities allow students to jump network ports, outsmarting many popular network appliances. Universities are therefore required to extensively re-configure their applications, or worse, shut down students' computers-causing disgruntlement in student communities.

Interviews:

- Industry experts at Palisade Systems, an internal network security company which provides PacketSure to twenty universities, are available to speak on P2P or bandwidth topics.

Network systems administrators from public and private universities who have successfully tackled the problems, as well as those who are still dealing with them, are available to share their experiences.

Please contact Daisy Wall at 212-771-3687, dwall@fitzgerald.com or Steve Brown at Palisade Systems at 515-296-5496, sbrown@palisadesys.com to arrange an immediate interview with Palisade executives or university network systems administrators.