

Spector 360 Helps Hickman County Eagles Straighten Up and Fly Right



Hickman County
Schools

Hickman County Schools

Industry: Education
Location: Centerville, Tennessee
Students/Teachers: ≈ 4200

Hickman County Schools operations include seven schools and a central office, serving approximately 3700 students, and more than 500 teachers and administrative personnel.

Technology Coordinator Robert Haviland technology tasks center on HP servers running Windows 2003 with more than 900 workstations.

For more information about Hickman County Schools, please visit:
hickman.k12tn.net

Based on teacher indiscretions as well as student misbehavior, Hickman County Schools was challenged to find a user-friendly monitoring program capable of recording all PC and Internet activity.

The Challenge

Teacher indiscretions, not the misguided actions of wayward students, prompted Technology Coordinator Robert Haviland's first experience with monitoring at Hickman County Schools several years ago.

"We know students do things they're not supposed to, but it was an employee that got us involved with monitoring," said Haviland. "We had a teacher who was shopping online when she was supposed to be teaching a first grade reading class.

"The teachers union is pretty strong ... to go up against it, you have to be prepared, so we collected almost a ream of reports showing this teacher was abusing the system EVERY DAY, not just occasionally. The reading scores of her students were way down, and first grade is a very critical timeframe for developing those skills.

"She was doing ALL THAT: emails, chats, IMs, surfing the web ... telling people about her personal life ... but the major indiscretion was the shopping instead of teaching. It was not a question of whether students would get behind in reading, but how far behind they would fall.

"To collect evidence we used a program we have since abandoned, partly because of support issues. It seemed as if the company just didn't have the resources to update the program regularly, and compared to what we know is out there now, it was hard to use and the reports very complex ... not user-friendly."

Based on the investigation, Haviland said the teacher resigned.

Search for a Solution

Approximately a year of monitoring inactivity followed abandonment of the aforementioned monitoring product, during which time both Haviland and the Director of Schools kept an eye out for the heir apparent to the school system's monitoring needs. During the hiatus, Haviland said the student bodies as well as teachers and administration remembered previous monitoring events, and these memories served to keep abuse down to a low roar. But more recently, the tide appeared to be turning, making a return to active monitoring just a matter of time – and the availability of

"In my review of possibilities, I didn't find anything close to SpectorSoft."

Spector 360 emerged as the clear, and affordable, choice."

Robert Haviland
Technology Coordinator
Hickman County Schools

appropriate technology.

"The Director of Schools noticed SpectorSoft while reviewing PC Magazine," said Haviland, adding that SpectorSoft stood out as an established company known for its award-winning monitoring software, strong support, and Inc. 500 status.

"In my review of possibilities, I didn't find anything close to SpectorSoft," said Haviland. "I looked at a couple of other programs and tested them ... it was just a headache.

"One requirement we had was that the new program's data needed to be shown in a variety of formats, especially Excel ... a line-by-line spreadsheet report. At first we were not used to seeing what Spector 360 had to offer, the easy-to-assess charts and graphs."

Haviland said after completing what he called a "tour" of Spector 360 — coupled with the positive initial reviews — Spector 360 emerged as the clear, and affordable, choice.

"Spector 360 fit everything we needed, so we went with it."

Discoveries

Spector 360 recently helped Haviland in an investigation that, at first glance, had earmarks similar to the scenario that prompted the school system's first use of monitoring software.

"Someone came to me and said 'so and so is not doing their job,'" said Haviland. "Using Spector 360's Quick View Reports, and refining my research by then using Activity Explorer, and finally User Explorer ... I did not see anything out of the ordinary."

Spector 360 takes the recorded Internet and computer activities from students — as well as teachers and administrative employees — and feeds that information into a database to provide Haviland and other designated school system representatives with more than 50 built-in graphic reports and unlimited customization.

Haviland has found the Spector 360 Dashboard and its "preconstructed" Quick View reports impressive.

"Quick View reports let you know what's happening REAL FAST," said Haviland as he reviewed monitored users in near real-time via the Spector 360 Dashboard. "For example, right now the Quick View charts are showing me EXACTLY how many hits websites are getting. Today, the most popular website is Google, with 1,500 page visits.

"If you see a website that shouldn't be popular, all you have to do is click the bar on the chart to find out what's going on."

Haviland finds it easy to keep track of network resources by easily viewing Spector 360's Internet Bandwidth usage report, just one of the choices found among the nearly 50 "out of the box" Spector 360 Quick View reports.

"It only takes a moment to see who's hogging bandwidth," said Haviland. "Right now, on the bandwidth chart, I see one user bringing down large amounts of data ... it looks like lots of music."

"We've had several students do the porn thing," said Haviland. "A few of them have been quite adamant in their efforts, and they've been after the real stuff."

With Spector 360's continuous oversight, indiscretions are documented, the responsible students addressed, and consequences paid.

"One student was repeatedly trying to access porn sites," said Haviland. "With Spector 360 and its keyword alerts, I received reports on it all. We kept records, took them to the assistant principal, and the student went to ISS (In-School Suspension). The other kids heard about it and that cut down that activity A LOT!"

"We do find copyrighted materials downloaded on occasion," said Haviland. "We used to find a lot of MP3 files, but since streaming audio and video has come on so strong, users have less need to download as much as previously."

Awareness

"With students, it only takes one to two experiences, and the word gets around quickly," said Haviland. "Every August and September, all you need to do is make a couple of examples, and you're set for the coming year."

"Since we implemented Spector 360, some of our students think we sit and stare at all screens at all times."

Working with Students/Employees

For teachers and administration as well as students, Haviland said the school's PC and Internet activity Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is clear.

"Essentially, we state that we do monitor and that anything created on a school PC, even personal emails, should be considered a public document," said Haviland.

At one time, the AUP was written to address all PC users, but in recent memory two AUPs have been developed, acknowledging the differences between the student body and the teacher/administrative personnel population.

Most simply described, Haviland explained how Spector 360 is used to monitor students:

"I get keyword alerts emailed to me, then I send a message to the responsible teacher."

When it comes to working with teachers and administration, Haviland said:

"Teachers will come up to me ... they are aware that we can see it (PC and Internet activity). They know the monitoring ability is there, and I also explain to them that they need to understand that what they do is **visible**. Given this understanding, they'll ASK for permission. I have to tell them there's a limit. Accidentally clicking on something for three seconds will not throw you under the bus."

"With teachers, the key is to keep them teaching. They can go to eBay for 5-10 minutes, but when they're supposed to be in a planning period, or especially when they're supposed to be teaching, we get upset with personal use of the PC and Internet."

*"With students,
it only takes one to two
experiences, and the word
gets around quickly."*

*"Since we
implemented Spector
360, some of our students
think we sit and stare at all
screens at all times."*

Robert Haviland
Technology Coordinator
Hickman County Schools

“Thanks to Spector 360, we have tightened the work environment as well as the learning environment.”

The simplest way to describe Spector 360’s impact: major reduction of bad stuff happening.”

Robert Haviland
Technology Coordinator
Hickman County Schools

Spector 360: The Software of Choice

For Haviland, one of the more important – and most impressive -- features of Spector 360 is the silent install.

“In testing, I saw that the login script installs fine,” said Haviland. “Spector 360 did it ... easily installed to a large number of computers ... otherwise I would have had to go to 900 PCs! That part of it dropped the effort to next to nothing. Spector 360 installed perfectly.”

“As soon as Spector 360 was installed, it was bringing in data,” said Haviland. “Users never noticed ... Spector 360 has low overhead.”

In addition to praising Spector 360’s nearly 50 built-in reports, Haviland finds report customization a snap. He said he uses custom reports as a fine-tuning process to the built-in Spector 360 reports.

“It’s easy to create custom reports,” said Haviland. “It only takes about a minute to set one up.”

Haviland also stressed there was only a slight need to work past the built-in reports.

“I only needed a couple extra reports beyond the ones already provided,” said Haviland.

Haviland said that because of the proliferation of web surfing and the protection against inappropriate subject matter and images demanded by the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), one of the custom reports he created was designed to fine-tune activity surrounding attempted and actual website access.

“I created custom reports to look for and document attempts at accessing websites identified by the words porn and proxy,” said Haviland.

Porn was chosen for obvious reasons, and proxy because accessing proxy servers are a common method of circumventing company- or institution-defined filters.

Haviland said he also enters those two keywords into a custom keystrokes report, and he entered the words into Spector 360’s Keywords Alert feature. Once saved as a “keyword”, Spector 360 emails reports to a designated email address, documenting use of the keyword in ALL the myriad search areas covered by Spector 360.

Haviland said he uses Spector 360’s powerful and unparalleled ability to “drill down” from Spector 360’s exclusive top-level vantage point to reports and features detailing the step-by-step activities of individual users.

“From Quick View reports you can drop to a custom report,” said Haviland. “At that point, you can see on a chart if users are typing in **proxy**, for example. Then, as easily as clicking on a bar you go to a Base Form, at which point you can see reports on User Data, and then view the actual event.”

Haviland stressed his previous experience with “Brand X” monitoring software reports was anything but easy, especially when compared to Spector 360.

“With the other product, I had to create a program to receive the reports I needed,” said Haviland. “I had to export, sort, and then count data. With Spector 360, it’s right there ... it shows you what you need to know.”

About Spector 360®

Spector 360 enables you to monitor employee PC and Internet use, analyze trends and patterns, search for specific details, investigate when something seems amiss, and report your findings all from the convenience of your desktop. Spector 360 is a highly scalable, centrally-managed, employee monitoring solution that is easy to deploy and manage, even company-wide.

Features at a Glance

- Monitor all employee PC and Internet activity with high-level charts, graphs and tables
- View detailed activity of individual employees with point-and-click drill down
- Automated reporting
- Includes context-based web filtering
- Multiple levels of security prevent tampering or disabling
- Configure, install and manage over existing network



Spector 360
June 17, 2008

"Top-notch reporting and monitoring"

"Highly configurable and scalable"

"Well-designed client server architecture"

-PC Magazine

"Time to learn? Time for upkeep? To me, those are minor," said Haviland.

"The Spector 360 sales team was great," said Haviland. "Response to my emails was quick, and all questions were answered. Sales worked hard, and always was available."

Haviland said on the rare occasion he needed Tech Support, the group was a standout.

"SpectorSoft Tech Support is always on top of everything," said Haviland. "SpectorSoft Tech Support representatives are easy to talk to ... and responsive. One time I received an email reply so rapidly I was astonished!"

Haviland said "we do everything we can to protect the kids."

Under CIPA, signed into law in December 2001, no school or its library is eligible to receive discounts on Internet technology products unless it certifies it is enforcing an Internet Safety Policy by including the use of filtering or blocking technology. CIPA decrees this Internet Safety Policy must protect against access, through computers with Internet connections, to visual depictions that are obscene, harmful to minors, or contain child pornography.

"We have a strong website filter operated by our Internet Service Provider (ISP)," said Haviland. "We feel like we're doing our job by both filtering and using Spector 360."

Apparently, the combination of filtering and Spector 360 is effective, because the discounts promised by CIPA have been available to Hickman County Schools.

"Thanks to Spector 360, we have tightened the work environment as well as the learning environment," said Haviland. "Spector 360 has helped a lot ... the use of Spector 360 has restored order."

"To those who have asked me, I have answered yes, Spector 360 is a good investment," said Haviland. ***"The simplest way to describe Spector 360's impact: major reduction of bad stuff happening."***



SpectorSoft offers PC and Internet monitoring and surveillance solutions for education, business, government and home users.

To learn more, and see how Spector 360 monitoring software can help solve your Internet abuse and productivity issues, please visit spector360.com.

Learn more about SpectorSoft monitoring and surveillance solutions for business at spectorsoft.com

SpectorSoft Corporation

1555 Indian River Blvd.
Vero Beach, FL 32960

888.598.2788 toll-free
772.770.5670 sales and support

www.spectorsoft.com

