

In The State v. Malware, the Supreme Court of Georgia Wins with Webroot

The Supreme Court of Georgia located in Atlanta has seven justices and approximately 80 employees, including staff attorneys, administrators, docket clerks and IT staff. After extensive case research—much of it online—the Court issues its opinions for the state bench, bar and public.

With so much online access involved, the Court now utilizes Webroot Web Security Service to filter traffic, protect its most vulnerable machines from web-based threats and provide the IT staff with detailed security reports on users' web behavior and potential malware threats.



The Problem

In December 2009, the Supreme Court of Georgia fell victim to malware advertising itself as an anti-virus program. The fake virus alert would appear onscreen, but unlike similar versions, users could not close the program. Clicking anywhere in the pop-up would run the malicious program, disabling virus scans, firewalls, Internet access and often completely crippling the machine. Even manual removal of the program was extremely difficult and time consuming.

While the McAfee desktop anti-virus program the Court uses worked well for viruses, it missed this malware and other Web-based threats. Additionally, this particular program frequently changed its naming definitions, allowing it to bypass many other security programs.

Why the Supreme Court of Georgia chose Webroot:

- Effective endpoint security
- Web filtering
- Sophisticated reporting tools
- Ease-of-use
- Cost

Because the Court's research requires nearly constant Web access, mainly through legal and research sites like Westlaw.com and Lexis.com, this threat and others like it could seriously hinder its ability to make timely rulings and publish opinions. In fact, 10 of the Court's computers were rendered inoperable by this program.

"After fixing the eighth machine, I decided to go with Webroot," says Bob McAteer, Director of Information Technology for the Supreme Court of Georgia.

The Solution

The Supreme Court of Georgia's tiny IT staff couldn't afford to spend the time or money to manually repair dozens of computers. Additionally, the Court's clerks and attorneys rely on their computers to research case law, so they need consistent and reliable Internet access to do their jobs.

McAteer regularly works with Blended Systems, a Jonesboro, Georgia-based technology consulting firm, which recommended the Webroot Web Security Service. After speaking with Webroot, he set up a 30-day trial on a single computer, and afterwards purchased licenses for the Court's most vulnerable computers.

Webroot Web Security Service is a SaaS offering, so it requires no hardware. "The competitors we looked at all required a server onsite," notes McAteer. It was also easy for McAteer to set up the software remotely: with one click, the real-time malware protection, with Webroot's Web Vulnerability Scanner and Spyware Detection, was protecting every at-risk computer.

"It's always on, and always catching stuff," he says. "These are things you sometimes wouldn't know are bad, but they certainly don't need to be in our system."

McAteer also now relies on the software's ability to create categorized user groups, and reporting tools that show users by bandwidth, top allowed URLs, top URL categories, bandwidth used and blocked malware. From Webroot's management portal, he can see where his users are going, what malware is targeting them and everything Webroot catches. Meanwhile, Court employees can now access any necessary site—virtually any site they want—without falling prey to malware or viruses. It's also saving the IT staff many hours of time.

"Since installing Webroot [March 2010], I haven't had to manually check any computer or remove malicious programs," says McAteer. "It does more than we hoped, and I want to put Webroot on everyone's box at the Court."

Comments

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**—Bob McAteer
Director of IT
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