

TOP 5 BEST PRACTICES TO BOOST GUEST WI-FI PERFORMANCE

In today's connected world, many businesses find it both necessary and beneficial to offer guest network access to their customers, partners and suppliers. A well-managed guest network helps promote more and better business interactions as well as goodwill. But guest network access also presents challenges. Blue Coat has identified the Top 5 best practices that can help optimize your guest Wi-Fi network performance and provide a more satisfying experience for your guests.

1 Provide Fair Bandwidth Allocation for All Users

Ensuring a good user experience for all guests is important. They need more than performance protection for their applications; they also need protection from each other. With a fairness policy, you can set dynamic partitions to allocate bandwidth fairly so that one power user does not overwhelm another. For example: a user who downloads a movie from iTunes, transfers a large file to an FTP site, and connects to a webcast all at the same time shouldn't be allowed to impact performance for others.

2 Maintain Quality of Service for Latency-Sensitive Applications

With the business world becoming more mobile and moving towards the cloud, more and more applications depend heavily on real-time connectivity to the network. Applications such as voice and video conferencing are now an integral part of everyday life. Partition these applications together and establish a minimum bandwidth reserve for them to ensure that they can perform at the desired level. Implement a fairness policy to ensure that bandwidth is distributed equally among all users, and that participation in a video broadcast by some users, for example, won't result in intermittent service for others.

3 Control the Impact of Recreational Traffic

Recreational traffic in the workplace is a fact of life. Most businesses allow a certain level of recreational usage within their networks; the key is to control and prioritize it so it does not disrupt business-critical operations. Establish a partition with a lower bandwidth limit (20 percent, as an example) for recreational traffic such as YouTube and Facebook and make it burstable at a

low priority. It can then access free bandwidth when available, but is throttled back when more-important applications require the resource.

4 Contain Aggressive Non-Urgent Business Applications

A technique similar to the one described above can be used to control other bandwidth-hungry applications such as FTP, email with large attachments, and large print jobs. While these applications require predictable performance, they are non-urgent in terms of latency sensitivity. Limiting the partition's bandwidth (to 10 percent, let's say) prevents the aggregate traffic from impacting the protected applications. A rate policy caps maximum bandwidth usage on a per-session basis (to 30Kbps per session, for example), so that one user downloading a large file or synchronizing Outlook folders will not prevent others from enjoying a good user experience.

5 Accelerate Performance for Company Portals and Preferred Applications

Not all guest traffic is created equal. Companies can leverage their guest Wi-Fi networks to promote their business with an improved and differentiated user experience. Faster access for customers to the company's online Web portal, better response time for custom applications, and faster, higher-quality delivery of preferred contents are examples of how guest networks can help to promote business values. Acceleration technologies such as caching and live-stream splitting can greatly improve network performance while reducing bandwidth consumption by 30 to 70 percent. It offers tangible benefits to both the users and the business, and provides a powerful case for ROI on guest Wi-Fi investment.

Consult with your Blue Coat account executive or an authorized Blue Coat partner to see what we can do to help you address challenges. You can also learn more about Blue Coat's WAN optimization and traffic management solutions by visiting www.bluecoat.com/products/packetshaper.