

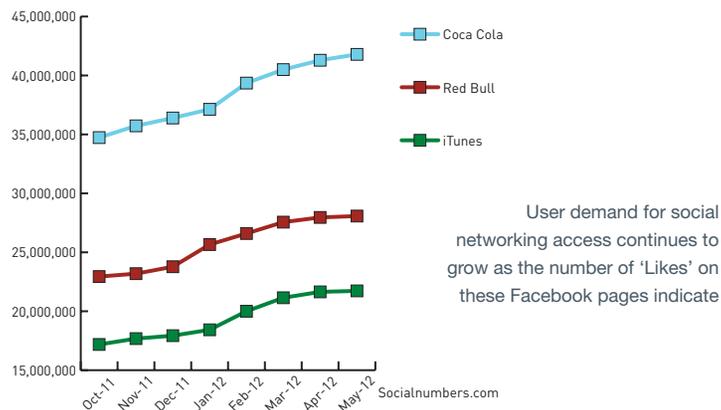
Social Media is Driving the Need for Granular Application Controls

In today's business world, your organization needs quick and flexible access to information along with reliable connectivity between all stakeholders. Web 2.0 applications are increasingly used to enable the dynamic relationships and information sharing businesses use to stay competitive. However, applications such as Facebook, IM, YouTube and others can consume valuable corporate bandwidth, are open to potential employee abuse, and can expose your organization's network to malware and increase the probability of information loss. In order to mitigate the risks and maximize the value of all these web 2.0 services, your organization needs the ability to identify, monitor, report on, and implement granular controls over web-based applications.

Use of Social Networking and Media is Rapidly Increasing

Business use of web 2.0 applications is growing exponentially. One study found over 72% of companies in Europe and 88% in the US will be increasing their social media spend by a median 10-25% in 2012. High growth areas are expected to be in customer service and engagement, as communications and marketing already rely heavily on these applications. Personal use of web 2.0 services is also quickly becoming an employee requirement, as the line between work hours and free time continues to blur.

Growth of Facebook Fans



Blue Coat's 2012 Web Security Report ranks search engine portals as the most frequently accessed websites, with social network sites (#2) and content servers (#5) not far behind.

Granular web application controls (the ability to control by user or group specific operations, such as posting comments, uploading video, or playing games, while leaving other content from the website available), along with web filtering and application-based policies can help businesses maximize bandwidth, minimize risks, and adhere to corporate and regulatory policy.

Blue Coat WebFilter is the First Step

Blue Coat WebFilter™ can analyze and assign web pages or URL's to one of the more than 84 pre-defined categories.

WebFilter provides deep analysis ratings and granular categorization on approximately 1 billion daily web requests by leveraging Blue Coat WebPulse™, a collaborative defense of over 75 million users.

Leveraging this significant amount of dynamic input, WebPulse is able to identify and categorize the most current and relevant web content in real time. The multi-dimensional URL categorization engine provides the ability to accurately assign up to 4 categories to a given web site – a required capability with the complexity of web 2.0 content. This capability together with Blue Coat's powerful proxy engine provides the basis for the most granular, accurate web application controls via the web application policy engine.

Web Application Policy Engine – Powering Granular Application Controls

Application policies allow organizations to control how users interact with web-based applications. For example, a policy can be used to prevent posting comments, uploading photos, downloading attachments, and other operations. Blue Coat's web application policy engine provides web application controls for over 100 applications and counting. Blue Coat automatically updates new applications and operations through WebPulse, so that policies are automatically updated and enforced. Social networking applications supported by a Blue Coat policy include Facebook and MySpace, email applications like Hotmail and Yahoo Mail, blogging sites like Blogger, media sharing sites like Flickr, and other web-based applications.

Blue Coat allows you to take the information in the WebFilter database, such as Application Name (e.g. Facebook), Application Operations (e.g. Post Message), and Application Category (e.g. Social Networking) to identify these different applications and operations and create policy for end-users, groups or the entire organization. The web policy engine allows you to create granular policies to control web application usage. This includes the ability to create a read-only application, such as Facebook, or simply prevent the download of possibly malicious attachments in webmail, without having to deny access to Facebook or webmail.

Monitoring and Reporting Are Essential

In addition to policy, monitoring and reporting are essential to having the visibility to determine what policy should be implemented. Monitoring and reporting allow an administrator to measure the effectiveness of policy and control. Blue Coat Reporter gives you the visibility necessary to see into web application and operation usage on a granular level. With Blue Coat Reporter, you can generate reports on web application usage and specific operation usage, such as commenting, uploading or downloading. This allows you to see the effects of a web application policy, before it is implemented, in clear and concise reports with drill down capability for detailed usage information.

Three Examples Using Popular Web Applications

For most organizations, it will become increasingly important to have control over who accesses web-based applications and how they are used. When blocking by operation across a category, unlike blocking by application category, users are prevented from performing the specified operation for all applications that support that operation. They can however, access the application itself, in some cases creating a "read-only" version of that application.

YouTube – Watching random videos monopolizes bandwidth and lessens productivity. However, for marketing purposes, an organization may want to allow the Marketing department to upload product videos and demonstrations to YouTube, while limiting this function for everyone else.

Facebook – Facebook is quickly becoming a business imperative. Businesses are increasingly under pressure to support Facebook, both from a business perspective and to allow access by employees during work hours. While it may not make sense to simply allow or deny access to the social networking site that has an estimated 750 million users, administrators do want to control what can be done via Facebook. With web application controls, administrators can determine whether users are allowed to post messages, upload pictures, upload videos, send an email, download attachment or upload an attachment. Your organization can still promote productivity, while remaining flexible.

Personal email – Blue Coat's web application policy engine lets organizations monitor and control the use of personal email accounts. For example, policy can be used to let people send/receive email, but prevent them from sending or receiving attachments. Confidential documents are protected, incoming bandwidth usage is limited, and exposure to malware is limited. Blue Coat Provides Complete Protection

The above examples illustrate the granular control the web application policy engine gives administrators over web usage. Blue Coat enables the fine tuning of social networking web activity to assist with compliance and some aspects of data loss prevention. Web application policy also enables better management of key application usage, such as webmail, by employees. Granular web application control helps protect the organizations and saves valuable network bandwidth for business critical activity.