

Success Story



University of Amman - Learning on the Safe Side

Astaro Unified Threat Management at the University of Amman

Established in 1990 as the first institution of higher education in Jordan, the Amman University continuously strives to provide high quality programs which rival the best universities in the world. Amman University recently implemented a highly effective and reliable centralized security solution, shielding more than 1,100 on campus PCs against viruses, worms, hackers and other cyber attacks. Perfectly suiting their needs, the IT experts at Jordan University selected the unified threat management solution Astaro Security Gateway for this task.



With approximately 6,000 students enrolled each year, the university boasts well-designed campus grounds and faculties ranging from Engineering, Pharmacy, Information Technology to Finance and Humanities and Law. The Amman University is internationally recognized and a high percentage

of graduates find employment in prestigious public and private institutions. In order to adequately respond to the constantly evolving challenges in IT security, Dr. Said Abu Al Shaar, the university's IT director, was required to adapt the university's network security infrastructure.

The Challenge

At the beginning of 2007, Dr. Said and his solution team found themselves assigned to a rather large network restructuring project. The tasks involved included the implementation of WLAN access, a new student registration system and the update of their network environment.

Right off the bat, Dr. Said already knew of the security issues that would arise through the high network load and the consequential data traffic congestions. Added challenges were provided by users who had installed individual software which bypassed the main Internet

proxy's security mechanisms. Furthermore, Dr. Said was required to analyze and solve security problems such as excessive spam traffic, virus attacks, unnecessary internal network load, access to inappropriate websites and uncontrolled downloads.

In order to address these issues effectively, the solution team tested products from companies including Cisco and Fortinet. These solutions could not cope with the tasks at hand; therefore, the university decided to implement Astaro Security Gateway.

About Astaro

Astaro is a leader in delivering Internet security appliances. The Astaro Security Gateway simplifies Email, Web & Network Security and has won numerous industry awards as it protects over 30,000 networks in 60 countries. Astaro products are distributed by a worldwide partner network with more than 1,000 solution partners offering local support and services. Astaro Corporation is headquartered in Karlsruhe, Germany, and Burlington, USA.



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High Performance Paired with Flexible Setup

Amman University specifically chose the Astaro Security Gateway 425 appliance as it is especially designed for enterprise class networks such as the Amman University network.

The first step of the installation process was to configure the gateway in order to guarantee general use of internet services. A huge advantage was found in the fact that Astaro Security Gateway supports Active Directory. This means that users can be efficiently divided into different groups in order to implement different levels of authorization. For instance, student access rights will differ in comparison to other user groups such as the accounting department or university lecturers.

Further advantages can be found in time-

based usage rules. This feature makes it possible for employees to visit private web sites during their lunch break, sites which are normally blocked during work hours.

In terms of web filtering, every organization will have its own standards and Amman University is no exception with its own special requirements. Astaro Security Gateway allows for targeted adjustment of user group permission levels for over twenty million screened web sites. These sites are summarized into sixty different categories and updated daily to include newly discovered websites. It is, therefore, possible to block pornographic websites categorical for example. To centralize virus detection, Astaro Security Gateway also scans downloads and emails for viruses, worms and Trojans.

Minimize Unnecessary Burden

University networks are unique. Students use the Internet not only to study, but also for private reasons. Security issues can be found in the fact that the students use their private notebooks for Internet connection via WLAN. Since the university cannot possibly regulate the kind of programmes which students install on their private notebooks, the data passing through the network will need to be checked. Today, file sharing is responsible for 80% of the internet traffic worldwide. Through Astaro, forbidding this kind of network traffic only requires minimal configuration: A simple checkmark in the administration interface.

"Just the content filter and the integrated web proxy enabled us to reduce the amount of data by approximately 50%", explained Dr. Said.

The ASG spam filter features two vastly superior qualities; the first is that all emails are compared with a public online spam database, resulting in an amazingly high recognition rate; the second is that the gateway intercepts and saves identified spam mails. The daily report informs the users about the filtered emails and allows them to decide which emails should be delivered.

A professional reporting system (Astaro Report Manager) was also implemented into the university's system environment. This tool allows the university to correlate their event data in real time, identify excessive downloads, detect cyber attacks and illustrate their network traffic.

Conclusion

"Astaro is characterized by a high level of flexibility, performance gains and customer-friendly design", Dr. Said in conclusion. Proxy and filtering functionality, virus detection for downloads and emails combined with a competitive price-performance ratio are additional reasons for the solution's continued success within academic environments. Above all, the possibility to use Active

Directory services and a professional reporting system afford the university simple administration and monitoring facilities.

Astaro has literally become part of Amman University's curriculum, as IT students use an additional Astaro Security Gateway installation as a display model in order to learn how security applications work.

Amman University



The Amman University was the first private university to be established in Jordan, dating back to 1990.

Since then, it has set a pioneering pace in the field of private higher education. With faculties ranging from Engineering, Pharmacy, and Information Technology to Finance, Humanities and Law, the facility enjoys wide Arab and international recognition. A large percentage of graduates from Amman University are later employed by prestigious public and private institutions. As an active member of the Association of Arab universities, Amman University has strived to provide high quality university education by recruiting academically distinguished faculty members. Furthermore degree programs are designed as curricula comparative to the best universities in the world today.

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