

NetAssure facilitates secure access to Internet services for young people in hospital



Young people living with a serious illness, chronic health condition or disability face unique challenges. When facing lengthy or frequent spells in hospitals, they are disconnected from peer networks and youth culture; which can result in boredom, isolation and a lack of support.

Providing access to an Internet connection goes a long way to alleviating this lack of interaction for hospitalised young people. Besides easing boredom, being online helps young people feel less isolated making it an avenue of social support allowing them to express themselves and feel an increased sense of belonging to a community.

Livewire is a free, safe and fun online community for young people, aged 10 to 21 years, living with a serious illness, chronic health condition or disability. A wholly owned subsidiary of the Starlight Children's Foundation, Livewire provides a supportive place for young people to hang out, connect, share experiences, creatively express themselves and know that they are not alone.

The Livewire Hospital Program, rolling out to hospitals across Australia, allows young patients in hospital to access Livewire from the bedside. Livewire provides either purpose built Livewire on Wheels trolleys with a secured computer or NetBooks.



The challenge put to NetAssure was to provide secure access to Livewire in hospitals. Livewire requires the highest standards of safety and security to protect members, and to build and retain trust in the Livewire service from hospitals and families. It is essential that Livewire minimise the risk of young people accessing inappropriate content or malware. In a reversal of the usual 'black list' approach, a 'walled garden' or 'white list' is preferable: all sites are blocked unless they are specifically permitted by administrators. In the past this scenario would entail a laborious procedure of updating the list on each laptop unit as sites were approved on an ongoing basis.

CHALLENGE

To provide a safe and secure Internet environment for young people accessing the Livewire online community (Livewire) in hospital.

SOLUTION

NetAssure's managed network service to assist with content filtering and reporting.

RESULTS

Walled garden approach keeps the access to Livewire in hospital secure and appropriate

For more information or to see first-hand how NetAssure will benefit your business with our 30-day free trial, contact NetAssure.

Phone: +61 2 9424 2000

Email: sales@netassure.com.au

However, at four major hospitals the focus on security has been greatly facilitated by the adoption of NetComm's NetAssure managed network service. NetAssure allows the white list to be centrally implemented, so that all machines connecting out through it are subject to the restrictions. Its firewall functions also protect against intrusion from outside, which is vital when the Livewire computers are linked to the hospital's network. Additionally, NetAssure defends against virus and malware proliferation, automatically isolating any infected machine from the others in the network.

The service also helps with ensuring the effectiveness of the overall initiative. NetAssure's reporting functions provide administrators with the specific usage of each device on the network. In cases where usage for a particular location or laptop is lower than usual, more marketing and training effort can be applied. The detailed access reports also help administrators define what sort of content is popular.

NetAssure is currently enabling the Livewire program at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, The Children's Hospital at Westmead, the John Hunter Children's Hospital Newcastle and the Canberra Hospital. These hospitals all operate under different Area Health authorities and have varying IT infrastructure and policies. NetAssure has been readily adaptable in each case.

"Ensuring the safety and security of our members and their data is a top priority", says Omar Khalifa, Managing Director of Livewire. "We asked Netassure to help us deliver a secure service that hospitals and families can trust," said Khalifa..

NetComm also assists Livewire by providing young people with 3G /WiFi access points at a majority of the Livewire hospitals around the country.