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Using 8e6 Internet Filtering and Reporting in a Blue Coat Environment

Introduction

Many organizations choose to deploy Blue Coat for caching and WAN acceleration in order to optimize the use of bandwidth. This can sometimes lead to a decision to include URL filtering and reporting on the Blue Coat appliance, with the assumption that this can be an easy method to deploy the solution. Unfortunately, this can leave many organizations with a less-than-optimal Internet Filtering and Reporting solution.

Blue Coat appliances are capable of doing an admirable job of caching and WAN acceleration; however, implementing Internet Filtering and Reporting via these same Blue Coat appliances can actually decrease the performance of the caching and WAN acceleration. There are also several benefits that could be lost by not using a dedicated best-of-breed Internet Filtering and Reporting solution. 8e6 Technologies offers appliance-based Internet Filtering and Reporting solutions designed to easily integrate into any network that is using Blue Coat for purposes of caching and WAN acceleration.

8e6 in a Blue Coat Environment

Since the 8e6 Professional Edition's R3000 Internet Filter uses pass-by technology, it is very simple to integrate into any network, including a Blue Coat environment. Pass-by technology allows the R3000 to monitor network traffic without the need to add another "bump in the wire" on the way out to the Internet. By using a port monitor on the switch, or a network tap, the R3000 can be installed so it "sees" all traffic destined to the Blue Coat appliance.

This installation method will provide best-of-breed Internet Filtering and Reporting, coupled with industry leading caching and WAN optimization provided by Blue Coat. From a network performance standpoint, you get the best of both worlds. The Blue Coat systems will not be burdened by the task of Internet Filtering and Reporting, which ensures that your caching and WAN optimization performance is not impacted. The 8e6 Internet Filtering and Reporting solution will not add any latency due to the pass-by approach.

Diagram 1 shows a simple example of the typical deployment method coupling a Blue Coat proxy system with an 8e6 Internet Filtering and Reporting solution. The R3000 is monitoring traffic destined for the Blue Coat appliance. If a blocked URL is requested, the R3000 will present a block page to the end-user, and will send a TCP-Reset packet to the Blue Coat appliance, letting the Blue Coat appliance know that the user is no longer requesting the blocked site.

8e6 Internet Filtering and Reporting Solutions in a Blue Coat Environment

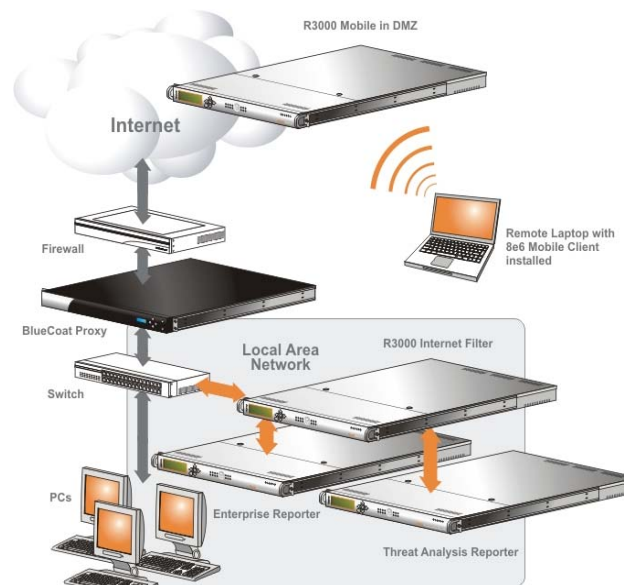


Diagram 1

Deploying 8e6 in a Load Balanced Blue Coat Environment

In the event that multiple Blue Coat systems are needed to handle traffic loads, a load balancer is typically used for this purpose. The deployment of the 8e6 Internet Filtering and Reporting solution would not change drastically. As you can see in diagram 2, the 8e6 solution would be deployed to monitor traffic destined for the load balancer. This still provides a solution that ensures the Blue Coat caching and WAN optimization solution is not burdened with the task of Internet Filtering and Reporting, and that a best-of-breed solution is used.

What is the Benefit of Using 8e6 for Internet Filtering and Reporting?

According to Gartner's report on the Secure Web Gateway, "If URL filtering reporting is a key requirement, the traditional URL filtering vendors still represent the best choice."¹ 8e6 Technologies has been providing best-of-breed Internet filtering and reporting since 1996.

From a reporting standpoint, 8e6 offers both real-time and forensic reporting that is unparalleled in the industry. These reports provide detailed information such as time, date, category, whether the request was blocked, method of categorization (URL, signature etc.), username, user IP, full length URL, and search engine request text (when applicable). This level of detail provides the forensic information necessary to prove the intent of the user and remediate Web usage threats by end-users.

Performance is also a consideration. Implementing Internet filtering and reporting on a Blue Coat appliance can have a serious impact on the caching speed and WAN optimization. In some cases, this impact may require installation of additional Blue Coat systems, which can significantly increase the cost of deployment. By using a best-of-breed solution such as 8e6 Internet Filtering and Reporting, you can ensure that the performance of the Blue Coat system is optimal.

Future Considerations

While the current 8e6 Internet Filtering and Reporting solution operates well in a Blue Coat environment, in July 2008 8e6 will be capable of integrating directly with your Blue Coat appliances. Release version 2.1 of the R3000 Internet Filtering appliance will support ICAP. This will allow the Blue Coat appliances to talk directly to the 8e6 Internet Filtering and Reporting appliances.

8e6 Internet Filtering and Reporting Solutions in a Load Balanced Environment

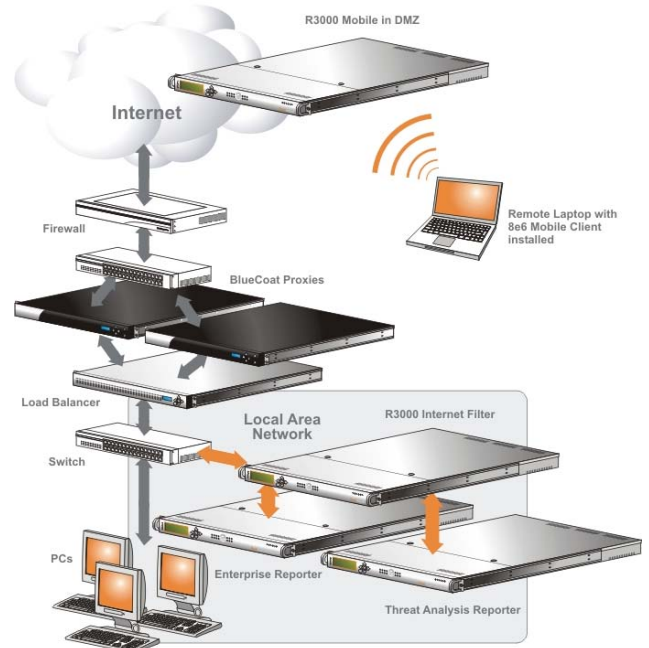


Diagram 2

¹Peter Firstbrook, Lawrence Orans, Arabella Hallawell
Magic Quadrant for Secure Web Gateway, 2007 (Gartner Research)
 Publication Date: 4 June 2007 ID Number: G00148895