



Anderson Community Schools Corporation develops a successful 1:1 program with the help of Lightspeed Systems®

CHALLENGE

Since 2014, Anderson Community Schools Corporation (ACSC) has trusted Lightspeed Systems to protect their students online with the deployment of a hardware-based web filter. But when the district shifted to distance learning in 2019, ACSC faced a problem with its 1:1 student device initiative: the district's hardware-based web filter only protected ACSC students while on school grounds. The moment students left campus, they became vulnerable to harmful online content.

With 10 schools in the district, ACSC admins needed to accommodate the diverse online access needs of each grade level: the upper grades required access to content that would be inappropriate for younger students. To accommodate teachers' different content needs, John Sedwick, Technology Integration Specialist at ACSC, wanted the power to customize web filtering for each grade level.

However, when classroom instruction transitioned to remote learning for the pandemic, the district's needs evolved further because ACSC teachers began noticing a decline in student engagement and classroom participation. To keep students learning, the district needed more visibility into what their students were viewing during class hours to see what distracted students from their work.

"Our teachers needed a tool that gave them insight into what students were doing online during class time," explained Sedwick.

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- John Sedwick, Technology Integration Specialist, Anderson Community Schools Corporation



SOLUTION

Anderson Community Schools Corporation switched from the Lightspeed Systems hardware filter to a cloud-based solution. Lightspeed Filter™ deploys patented AI smart agents at the device level, keeping ACSC students safe from harmful online content, no matter where they learn.

Built for out-of-the-box CIPA compliance, Lightspeed Filter leverages 20 years of web-indexing to filter more than 60 million URLs into 138 default categories. With granular settings at the local level, Mr. Sedwick has full control and can categorize websites in each student group. He can also block new and unknown websites before they have been categorized in the database to minimize security risks.

But Lightspeed Filter is not the only solution Anderson Community Schools Corporation added to its portfolio. "We subscribed to Lightspeed Classroom Management™ because we had a lot of students playing on gaming sites when they should have been focused on instruction," said Mr. Sedwick.

With Lightspeed Classroom Management, ACSC educators receive real-time notifications on the teacher dashboard the moment students are off-task. Teachers can view students' screens to see what they're viewing, lock devices, and close unwanted tabs to redirect their attention to the task at hand. ACSC teachers can also record student browsing behaviors to learn how to intervene most effectively.

RESULTS

"Blocking individual websites for a whole district is a full-time job," Mr. Sedwick said. "Once we implemented Lightspeed Filter, my job became a lot easier. The tool's categories automatically blocked the bad content, so part of my job was already done. And the ability to create grade-specific filters has been a game-changer for our schools. Students in higher grade levels can access the appropriate content they need during instruction without blocking the same content from lower grade levels. This feature also allows us to filter out non-educational gaming websites, while keeping the educational ones—like those that teach coding—open."

ACSC teachers have also been pleased with Lightspeed Classroom Management. When working with a single student, teachers may use the screen views to keep an eye on other students to make sure they remain engaged. Granular control over YouTube with Lightspeed Filter Smart Play™ controls was also essential to the district's efforts: John Sedwick now blocks specific video URLs to keep students on track. Such control over content has also empowered district educators to take a deeper look at curriculum before they approve it.

"I've seen a lot of complicated software options, but Lightspeed is not one of them," Mr. Sedwick concluded. "It's easy to set up and use, and the dashboards are easy to read. Our education environment would be significantly changed if we hadn't partnered with Lightspeed Systems."

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