New features on a platform that's second to none

The Mission Control Web Proxy has recently gained some impressive new features. However, for Christoph Göldi, who is responsible with his team for the service and its ongoing development, it's actually the proxy's unchanged basic characteristics that make it a unique solution on the market.

Mr. Göldi, you and your team are responsible for the Mission Control Web Proxy service. From your perspective, how important is a proxy in ensuring secure and available networks?
→ Christoph Göldi: The importance of the proxy has increased enormously. Nowadays every company that operates globally is completely and utterly dependent on a high-performance internet connection that's also reliable and secure. At the same time there's been a massive rise in complexity, and the threat of attacks via websites has increased exponentially in the past 24 months.

You're now offering new functionality on the Mission Control Proxy. How do customers benefit from it?
→ In a nutshell: our new proxy is even more secure, performs even better and has become even more transparent in the way it works.

Let's begin with security. Can you tell us about the improvements in detail?
→ One important new feature is in the area of SSL. Today the proxy is already capable of terminating HTTPS connections in order to examine the content for malware and then display the content via encryption with a certificate in the client browser.

SSL certificate mimicking now lets us take it a step further: in addition to the existing function, we can now supply users with even more relevant information about the certificate. This helps them decide whether or not to accept the certificate and with it the server connection.

Our proxy is also able to offer users of the Microsoft Internet Explorer the option of using Google Safe Browsing technology. This database – the biggest of its kind in the world – is updated daily with up to 10,000 new entries, and constitutes the most up-to-the-minute collection of infected websites.

And how's the performance?
→ We've managed to boost the performance of the system even further. The built-in load balancing capability lets us process data traffic flexibly from 10 Mbit/s up to gigabit speeds. For the filter we use state-of-the-art cloud technology, which ensures that the proxy can constantly retrieve information from the manufacturer's database about new suspicious websites. And with the new dual-stack capability, today it's already possible to reach IPv6 websites with a client in an IPv4 network.

You also mentioned increased transparency …
→ Right. Here we've improved the visibility above all. The key to this is the completely reworked log viewer – we call it the Advanced Proxy Log Viewer. It displays detailed information that gives clarity about the individual process steps. That makes it easier to understand what's going on and helps fix problems.

For customers who want to conduct in-depth analyses, we now offer a log-shipping mechanism that lets us provide a customer-specific log format via syslog, if needed.

And to round it all off, we've given the error messages a good overhaul. They now offer the end users better information and options on how best to respond if a request is blocked.

Transparency seems to be an important topic for you...
→ Yes, very much so, because it helps users better understand precisely which processes are running. This is important because it sensitizes people to the dangers, but also because it helps them understand when certain content is blocked for policy reasons.

That's also the big advantage of the new URL Tracker...
→ Exactly. The new URL Tracker is a tool that makes it possible for users to examine and comprehend every single step of a web request in the Mission Control Portal. This makes it very easy to see which policy the proxy applies and which actions this triggers. That's the kind of transparency we aspire to.

Are there any other points that you think characterize the Mission Control Proxy?
→ Although I'm enthusiastic about the new features of the proxy, for me it's actually the well-tried features that make the Mission Control Web Proxy unique. By that I mean particularly the Integrated Service Management that characterizes all Mission Control Security Services. With it, even proxies that are distributed globally at different locations can be operated centrally. This makes it so much simpler to implement the current trend of bringing the internet closer to the user. But it also guarantees that the global policy is consistently implemented at every location. Add to that the rapid response, 24×7 operations and the Mission Control Portal, which gives our customers full control and transparency with regard to their proxies, and lets them retrieve statistics and reports. And last but not least, the proxy service also means that with the Mission Control Security Services our customers can reduce their technology risk to an absolute minimum.

What exactly do you mean by that?
→ Well, over the past 24 months we have replaced three core components in our proxy alone. We are constantly developing our services, keeping an eye on the market and testing new technologies. The evaluation and implementation of new technologies is a very elaborate process, but it's something we pursue proactively and at no cost to our customers. This way we can ensure that customers always have a state-of-the-art service at their disposal, without putting any strain on their budget. And – what's certainly most critical from the customer's perspective – we can absolutely guarantee the utterly reliable and secure operation of the Mission Control Web Proxies at all times.