

NetOp School



Release notes NetOp School version 5.50

Danware is proud to introduce NetOp School 5.50. It will also be available as a commercial upgrade to our existing customers using version 5.00 or earlier.

Major news in version 5.50

The main purpose of this release is full compliance with the new architecture of **Windows Vista**. On top of that a new technology is implemented to improve the control of students' use of the internet. Previously only Microsoft Internet Explorer was being handled and blocked. Now **blocking of all browsers** is supported, including alternative browsing methods, like from within programs, etc. Finally, NetOp School is now delivered as Windows Installer version only while Install Shield edition is discontinued. This has also called for a revision of the Student Deployment tool.

Compatibility

NOTE: Because of major changes and improvements in the basic communication layer, version 5.5 is NOT backwards compatible with any previous version. They may connect and some functions may still work, but the changes in the underlying structures throughout the program are so extensive that they may cause failures.

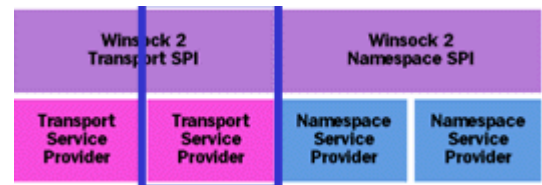
Internet policy – blocking all browsers

Based on core Microsoft technology we have developed a specialized URL filtering software component to prevent Web browsers from accessing certain sites, regardless of the browser installed on a desktop.

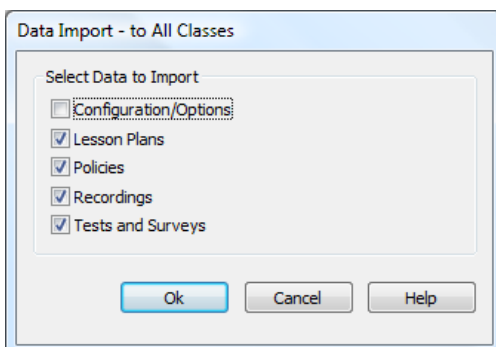
The filtering is taking place at a very low level, thus increasing the filtering success rate significantly. No changes were made to the existing interface, only the underlying technology was changed to make NetOp School the most reliable filtering tool in its category – network classroom management.

If blocked, the originally requested internet address is being re-directed to a live 'blocking page' showing the 'Blocked' information to the Student. It is possible to decide for another 'blocking page' than the default.

NOTE: This new method also adds the possibility to block specific ports under Internet Policy, using the convention *:21 (as an example of blocking Port 21).



Data import from USB-keys



To improve ease-of-use of the feature allowing teachers to copy the Teacher module to a removable media such as a USB stick, a new Import tool has been created.

When a teacher returns from home, bringing the changes to e.g. the library of Tests or Policies, it is now made easy to import these changes to the Teacher module installed on the desktop computer. Just select categories and the files are automatically placed in the correct directories, ready for use from within the desktop Teacher module.



New Student Deployment Tool

As a consequence of the delivery as Windows Installer edition only, the Student Deployment method has changed. And it is now possible to choose between more methods when defining a remote Student roll-out. In the first place it is possible to decide for using a dedicated 3rd party MSI deployment tool. Selecting NetOp Student Deployment from within the Teacher module offers three options:

- Simplified – setup using the Student wizard for standard configuration
- Advanced – setup using the Student Options for the full set of configuration settings
- Existing – setup based on pre-defined configuration files. (ndb)

Communication

- **Communication architecture, wireless networks** – by nature, wireless network cards (and even access points) try to save power by going idle if possible. That, in combination with access points “time slicing” while sharing the bandwidth for all connected computers, could cause the connection between Teacher and Students to become unstable because of high TCP/IP packet loss.

On top of that, the default method for NetOp School is Broadcast, which some wireless access points are less responsive to. Some may not be configured properly for broadcast and some may even not allow Broadcast at all. Tests have proved that changing the behavior of NetOp School communication to Multicast (if supported by Access point) dramatically improves performance.

For that reason, a ‘Switch to Multicast if possible’ dialog box will automatically appear whenever the Wireless Profile is selected. The choice is optional, but recommended if supported by the access point.

- **Changes:** Mainly to improve communication on **wireless networks, but in fact valid for all networks**, the default behavior of communication has been changed. Since broadcast generally is the most efficient communication method, this will stay default (optionally changeable). On top of that, the Teacher now takes better care of keeping communication alive, by continuously checking that all connected Students in fact do receive the Broadcast, and if not, automatically switching to Unicast to each of those unable of receiving broadcast packets. Moreover, the teacher will keep on checking “the Unicast Students” with the purpose of switching back to Broadcast, whenever optimal. Finally, Multicast communication is no longer supported by additional Broadcast packets, meaning Multicast profile relies totally on a correctly configured Multicast setup from the customer side.

Miscellaneous - important issues, news and improvements

- **Activity feature on Terminal Server**
The Activity feature is temporarily disabled on TS/Citrix, because we in our testing lab ran into overload problems on the CPU side, which eventually disrupted all other communication. We will investigate this phenomenon more closely and intend to correct this in a later hotfix.
- **Wave Systems Corp. – Embassy Trust Suite**
According to Wave Systems Corp, one of their LSPs may prove incompatible with other LSP solutions. On some Dell models, probably on some IBM ThinkPads as well, we have found such an incompatibility issue with the pre-installed security software, Embassy Trust Suite. The description from Wave Systems at <http://www.wave.com/csc/customerservice/documents/pba/pba-008.asp>

‘The presence of the Wave LSP can result in compatibility issues with some LSP provider software. The current patch removes the Wave LSP from the Winsock catalog. The biolsp.dll is only required for use with Embassy Authentication Server (EAS). A newer version of the biolsp.dll is available which resolves the incompatibility problem with other software and may be requested for use with

NetOp School



EAS.'

Some solutions: The above link offers a patch to remove the biolsp. This link from Dell offers an upgrade to the latest version of the trust software:

<http://support.euro.dell.com/support/topics/global.aspx/support/dsn/en/document?c=d&k&dl=false&l=da&s=gen&docid=2196C56F0EBB9E61E0401E0A55175F32&doclang=en&CS=>

- **Blocking page.**

In connection with the new, more extensive internet blocking method a new Teacher option has been defined in Options:Sharing – Blocking page. You can decide to re-direct the originally requested internet address to any URL of your choice and with your own design and message.

- **Blocking of Ports**

The new method for filtering internet traffic also adds the possibility to block specific ports under Internet Policy, using the convention *:21 (as an example of blocking Port 21).

- **New Student netop.ini settings for datapath.**

The Student module receives and writes e.g. a Policy xml file to the defined 'datapath', either the default or the netop.ini specified. For that reason it is important that the Student module has 'write' rights to the given directory.

In previous versions, setting a datapath in netop.ini would cause all Student related files (configuration files (.ndb), Policy files, etc.) to be placed in the same directory, a directory that would probably be write protected to prevent Students from updating the configuration files.

The optional 'datapath' setting has now been separated from other files, and new optional 'path-settings' for Policy files, Media files, Messages files, recording files, and Test files can be defined to avoid problems of write protection.

- **New language versions – software only**

Russian and Czech versions are introduced

- **File Distribution – Japanese version**

Improved handling of specific characters in file paths to avoid misinterpretation of actual file names during File Distribution.

- **NetOp Snapshot folder on Desktop**

In previous versions this folder was created at time of installation. Instead, this will now be created first time a snapshot is taken, presenting a message box stating that and where it was created. As before the path for this folder can be set in Options:Sharing.

- **Teacher on USB key**

Previously some functions were not available if the Teacher was run from a USB key on a system where no previous or present installation of NetOp School was found. Now, every function is available directly, although screen transfer performance may be affected by the missing so-called NetOp Helper Service, taking care of optimal speed based when a Teacher module is installed on the local machine.

- **Detection of Windows Full name**

In previous versions of NetOp School, NetOp Student was sometimes unable to detect the users full name, causing problems wherever that was chosen to be displayed or used. On Windows XP/2003/Vista/2008, this problem is fixed starting with NetOp School version 5.50