

# Fresno Unified School District Deployed **DNSFilter** To **35,000** **Android** Devices

## The Companion Device Initiative

[Fresno Unified School District](#) is the third-largest school district in California. Their school district has over 100 schools, ranging from pre-K to adult learning. The student body is made up of over **73,000 students** and **100% of their students qualify** for free or reduced lunch.

One of the most important district goals between 2014-2019 was for all students to “excel in reading, writing, and math” while staying on target to graduate. The school district devised the eLearning Companion Device Initiative as one of the ways to support this goal. By providing students with tablets, [they could offer](#) “access to learning resources and activities, anytime and anywhere, on and off campus.”

A lot of students, prior to the Companion Device Initiative, didn’t have access to computers at home—in some cases they didn’t have WiFi. They want all students to have the same opportunities to learn both inside and outside the classroom.

As Jeff Solano, IT Information Manager, put it, “We try to provide for the community as best as we can. There’s no cost [to the family] for these devices. Anyone who needs one can get one. We gave them to students who needed them.”

Providing devices to students would allow them to complete their assignments, study, and continue learning after the school day is over.



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**Jeff Solano**

IT Information Manager

# Putting the Plan Into Action

Aside from Jeff, other parties instrumental to the deployment of the tablets were Ashley Aouate (Security Advisor for the district), the entire IT team, and other departments of Fresno Unified School District. While giving tablets to students enables them to learn outside of school hours, unlimited access to the internet also has its downsides. Fresno Unified School District needed to enable website restrictions to protect children from seeing inappropriate content and accidentally encountering malicious or deceptive sites that could infect their new tablet devices with malware.

“We needed a way to make sure that the kids are browsing safely,” Jeff said regarding the Companion Device Initiative. “Obviously we don't want to give out devices where students can browse inappropriate sites... So we wanted to make sure the kids’ experience was safe and secure and the parents feel at ease with the device, knowing that it is being protected.” Ashley added, “In addition to protecting students from inappropriate content, filtering the devices also protects the device and users from malware, phishing, and other security threats.”

The team first evaluated parental control software Qustodio, but found the deployment “cumbersome”. They also explored what other options and alternatives to content filtering on devices existed to ensure students were safe and parents felt confident in the protection.

At the time, DNSFilter had an iOS Roaming Client agent and plans to release an Android agent in the future. DNSFilter worked with Fresno Unified School District closely to accelerate the launch of their Android Roaming Client. “The collaboration between the district and DNSFilter was great. We were able to meet a very tight deadline,” said Ashley.

The school district needed to turn these devices out quickly, and Jeff was impressed by the turnaround time. Fresno Unified School District first reached out to DNSFilter in early August 2018. By mid-October (just 2.5 months later), the school district was installing and testing DNSFilter. By early November, over 5,000 tablets had the DNSFilter Roaming Client installed.

“It was a really quick turnaround time,” according to Jeff. “They let us test it out and we saw how easy it was to deploy, especially with our MDM solution...Once our CTO saw how easy it was to configure DNSFilter and set up our filtering, we ended up going with DNSFilter for all of our Android devices.”



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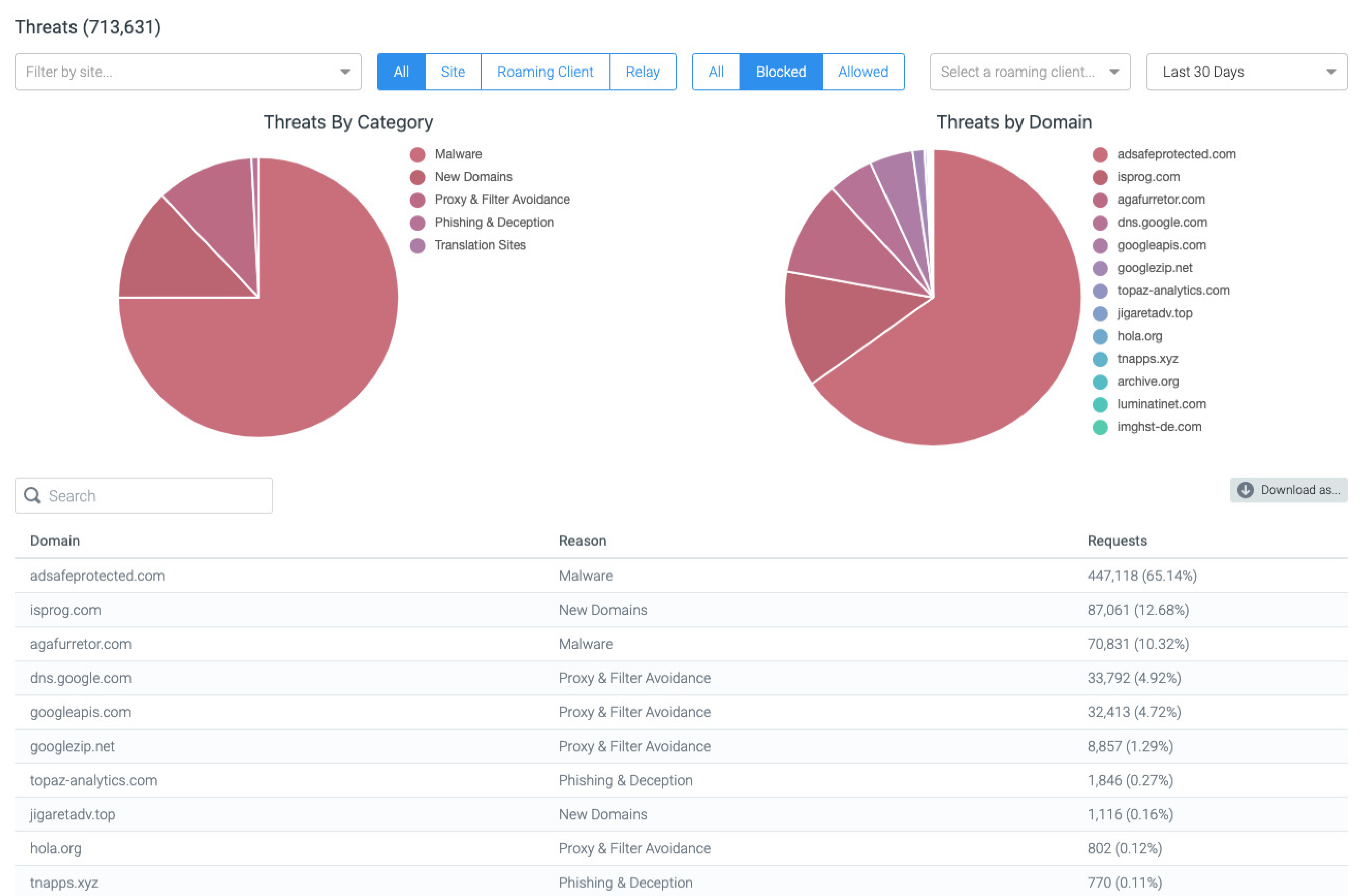
**Jeff Solano**

IT Information Manager

# The Results

One major benefit of implementing content filtering with DNSFilter has been the ability to limit support calls. Since students are only accessing legitimate sites, parents don’t need to create support tickets to report content that should be blocked. The Fresno Unified School District’s family center already gets a high volume of support calls, but the calls are rarely ever about content filtering.

In regards to the limited number of support calls the school district sees, Jeff said: “Really the only calls, if any, are [a parent saying] ‘This site's being blocked, but it's a legitimate site’ according to them. But then when we look, it actually it's not legitimate and it is properly categorized.”



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On average, the school district is blocking over 700,000 deceptive sites every month on nearly 35,000 student devices. A large percentage of the threats blocked are malware. This not only cuts down on the need for additional IT support on behalf of the school district, but it ensures that students can continue using their devices uninterrupted.

“I've never heard a complaint about the devices, or even someone trying to circumvent around DNSFilter to try to get to those explicit sites. It's been pretty steady. It's worked out really well for us.”

COVID-19 was a large part of the 2019-2020 school year. And while some schools across the country struggled to find a way to move classes online, Fresno Unified School District students were able to transition their companion devices into classroom learning tools.

Despite the limitations the pandemic put on classroom learning, Fresno Unified School District had [a higher graduation rate compared to the previous year](#) (2018-2019). What the school district was able to accomplish in 2020 is laudable, and we're proud to power their filtering capabilities to create a safe place for learning.

## According to Jeff

"Regardless of the industry, DNSFilter would fit your [IT] environment." - Jeff Solano, IT Information Manager

It's been over 2 years since Fresno Unified School District first implemented DNSFilter. "It's worked out really well for us. It works with our MDM solution.... I have no complaints whatsoever."

"For the mobile device deployment, it's super smooth and efficient. It's super easy to set up... Overall the experience has been pretty amazing... I would recommend anyone who is looking for a quick, easy [content filtering](#) solution on their mobile platform, that definitely DNSFilter is a great solution for them."

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