NetRef Helps Focus Learning During a Distracting School Year

Learn how teachers in Humboldt (IA) are using NetRef to monitor and manage device activity in class and remotely.

Jennifer Savery has many roles within Humboldt Community School District. In addition to teaching 7th grade language arts and 8th grade Spanish, she also serves as the district's TLC coach specializing in EdTech. A typical day for Savery is spent teaching students as well as teaching teachers to integrate technology into their classrooms. Savery clarifies, "I'm not the 'Smartboard is broken, go fix it' person." Instead, she supports tech integration in the district's four buildings.
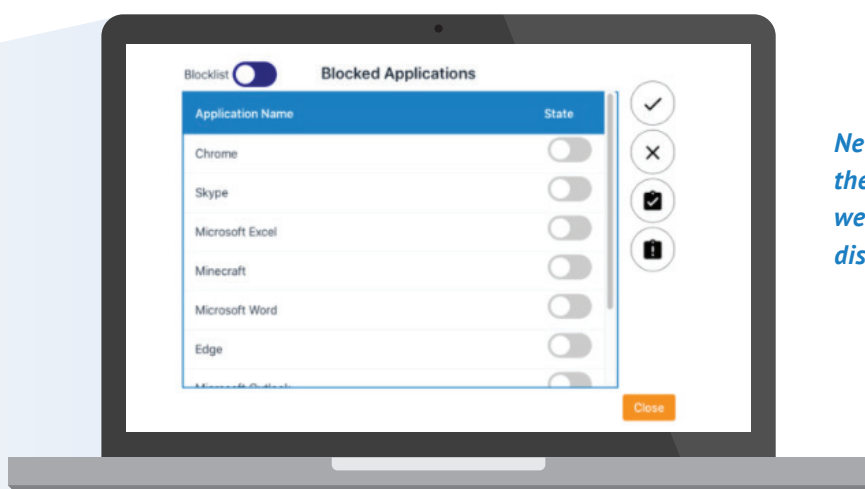
In that role, Savery realized that Humboldt needed a more robust EdTech management tool to ensure that the district's almost 1,500 students were using the internet, licensed programs and their devices for learning. Humboldt's previous EdTech program did not meet all their needs. Like most schools, Humboldt transitioned to remote learning in the spring of 2020, and they needed a program that met all the challenges their teachers were facing in school and at home.

> "
>
> *It met so many different needs, and the platform is so easy to use.*
>
> "

Even though the district only started using NetRef in 2020, Savery says the system is already making an impact. With the need to now monitor students at home, NetRef enables teachers to push websites out to students working on district-owned devices remotely and manage access to websites and learning applications from a distance. As she continues to familiarize herself with the many functions of NetRef, she's looking forward to utilizing the ROI and Engagement reports. But NetRef's most popular feature among teachers so far? The Allowlist.
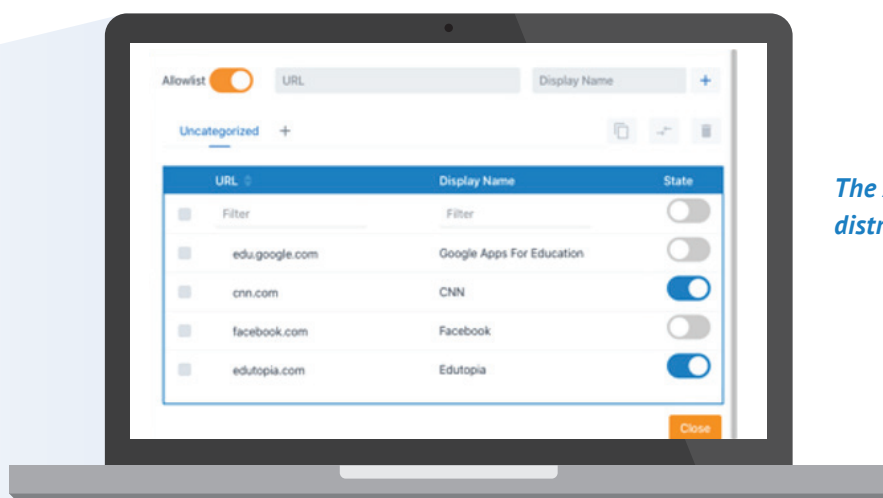
Applause for the Allowlist

NetRef offers Allowlist and Blocklist features to help educators tailor EdTech access on district- or school-owned devices. When teachers create a **Blocklist**, students still have complete internet and application access with the exception of specific restricted sites. Humboldt uses the Blocklist for setting district-wide rules for online access.

NetRef's Blocklist keeps access to the Internet open except for specific websites, subdomains and apps the district or a teacher selects.

The **Allowlist,** on the other hand, limits student access to only a select group of sites and apps chosen by the teacher. Allowlists can be created for an entire class or just an individual student. "It's so nice that it's so simple," Savery says. "You can change the rules for that one child … without disrupting your whole class." The Allowlist helps students focus on the sites they need for learning while limiting (or eliminating) distracting content. It's also particularly beneficial for locking down online testing environments to deter cheating.

The Allowlist restricts access to just district- or teacher-selected sites.

Though Humboldt is currently operating in-school learning, some families have opted for remote learning or have had to move to remote learning briefly to quarantine. The ability to create Allowlists and Blocklists not just for an entire district or school, but for a particular classroom or student, has proven especially useful in these situations.

Savery likes that she can provide different guidelines for different students as needed, and NetRef is flexible to meet the needs of all learners. For example, one family doing at-home learning asked Savery to work with their child who was struggling to stay focused and get their work done. She applied an Allowlist over the weekend and, "the student was so different on Monday," she says.

> **The support system from NetRef is amazing. Second to none. I have never worked with any other company that has been so easy to work with and so readily available.**

Nothing But Nice Things to Say About NetRef

Savery enthusiastically points out that any question she's had about integrating and using NetRef in the district's first year has been met with prompt, patient support, even during the pandemic. "The support system from NetRef is amazing," she says. "Second to none. I have never worked with any other company that has been so easy to work with and so readily available. The program is very easy, and so worth it so far."

NET REF
Manage. Monitor. Know.