

# Network Access Control That Really Works!

## Impulse Point Safe•Connect™ NAC Lightens Workload of IT Support Staff

In 2003, the University of Rhode Island started the origins of a network access control solution when they installed an open-source network registration effort on their residential network. It did basic device registration and authentication, but viruses were continuing to cause major network outages—taking down the system with relative ease.

URI found that most commercial NAC products were very limited and could not handle the large network requirements of the university which has more than 5,000 devices in the residential network alone. They also discovered that solutions came with a price—namely, overhead and manpower costs for installation and massive integration.

Network problems continued to occur and URI felt obligated to act, installing Bradford Campus Manager NAC solution in its dorms in 2005. “It was too challenging to accomplish the simplest of tasks,” says Alan White, Information Security Architect at URI. “It was taking so much more of everything—more energy, more effort, and more time—to accomplish NAC. We needed a simpler solution for our complex environment. That product only works well in smaller environments that are homogenous and less complex.”

Further research and a comprehensive decision matrix led URI to Impulse Point’s Safe•Connect NAC.



UNIVERSITY OF  
Rhode Island

### Customer Profile

Location: Kingston, RI

Industry: Higher Education

[www.uri.edu](http://www.uri.edu)

### Decision Process

After using other NAC solutions in its dorms, the University of Rhode Island developed a comprehensive decision matrix to compare NAC solutions from a technical and business perspective.

### Solution

Safe•Connect NAC-as-a-Service Offering provides ease of use for both students, faculty, and IT support staff, resulting in a more secure network environment.

### Benefits

- Enhanced User Experience
- Scalability
- Managed Services Support
- Real-Time Security Policy Assessment
- Remediation Guidance
- Broadcast Messaging
- Controlling Peer-to-Peer File Sharing
- Centrally Deployed and Managed



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The University developed a comprehensive decision matrix to compare NAC solutions, prioritizing features and weighting factors to gather the empirical data that would result in a technical and business decision.

“We considered everything we could,” continues White. “Ease of implementation was extremely important due to a lack of available technical resources and manpower. The solution also had to be able to handle our high performance network. While cost was important, it was not the highest priority.”

The University of Rhode Island considered multiple network access control products, including the “big names”, in their search for a better way to NAC. As part of the due diligence of selecting a NAC solution, the University went through the sales pitch process with other vendors. “After seeing Impulse and Safe•Connect, the other products left something to be desired. The product demonstrations reinforced the fact that we wanted Safe•Connect,” says White. “We wanted to work smarter, not harder.”

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Alan White  
Information Security Architect  
University of Rhode Island

“Safe•Connect provided the ease of installation we were looking for – everything was pre-loaded and it only took about an hour to install. Safe•Connect also comes with a Managed Service program – we don’t have to worry about upgrades or troubleshooting. It’s all taken care of without having to dedicate resources to it.”

The University of Rhode Island NAC implementation includes Safe•Connect in both their residential and administrative areas, with the capability to manage 20,000 devices simultaneously.

“With Safe•Connect in place, we are finally able to do something we’ve been trying to do for years,” says Alan White. “We now have the option to take ‘at risk’ machines off the network with the click of a button or to allow the system to do it automatically. It used to take 10 to 15 minutes for each machine, multiple times a day, all day, all week. We’re saving hours each week with just this simple task, which frees up resources to focus on other projects.”

“Safe•Connect is making life easier. We’re now able to view real-time and historical policy status data of what’s on our network at any given time. Previously, it was a guessing game.”

### Managed Support Service

Safe•Connect™ is supported by the NAC industry’s only Managed Support Service offering. Impulse Point provides continuous proactive monitoring and support that includes hardware server and software problem determination and resolution, as well as upgrade protection to future software functional releases. Impulse Point prides itself on the quick, efficient, and accurate implementation of the Safe•Connect NAC Solution and is available to provide personalized advice and support throughout project planning, installation, and deployment. All necessary Policy Appliance hardware, software licenses, and the following support services are included in the initial first year price of the Safe•Connect solution:



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- Implementation planning and server pre-load and testing
  - Standard remote installation assistance and training
  - First Year Impulse Managed Support Services:
    - Remote policy enforcer appliance monitoring
    - Problem determination and resolution
    - Appliance hardware maintenance
    - Installation of all software maintenance
    - Remote disaster recovery daily backups

The ability to maintain up-to-date support for the most current anti-virus, anti-spyware, operating system, and other endpoint security software is a major benefit of Impulse Point's Managed Services Offering. Impulse Point owns the responsibility of identifying, supporting, and updating customers within 48 hours as a standard component of its managed support service.

### **Real-Time Security Policy Assessment**

The Safe•Connect solution performs both pre- and post-admission security checks in real time without any network traffic degradation. Safe•Connect functions out-of-line and provides continuous security assessment and enforcement across wired, wireless, and VPN networks with no performance bottlenecks, maintenance-driven network outages, or as a single point of failure. The solution provides continuous policy assessment and delivers real-time Layer2 quarantine isolation (or placement in a captive portal)—while allowing the quarantined device to communicate with the remediation services required to regain acceptable use policy compliance and network privileges.

### **Remediation Guidance**

The Safe•Connect NAC solution is intuitive and user friendly for both the end users and IT support management teams. Users not in compliance receive individualized policy notifications regarding the reason for non-compliance (e.g. out of date anti-virus protection) and are guided through the remediation process with instructions and a link to an internal or external source where the appropriate software or virus definition can be downloaded. Because the remediation process is simple and straight-forward, users follow through to regain compliance and access to the network.

### **Broadcast Messaging**

School campuses need to quickly notify students and faculty in the event of an emergency situation. Safe•Connect has the ability to broadcast an information or emergency message on-demand to everyone whose computer is authorized to access the campus network. Safe•Connect can also send messages to specific devices, specific user groups (staff, faculty, students, etc.), or individual users. Notification can be made quickly and administrators can track the acknowledgements of receipt for compliance purposes.

### **Enforcing Peer-to-Peer File Sharing**

Impulse Point is committed to helping schools address the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008's (HEOA) Peer-to-Peer file sharing requirements. Beyond traditional NAC capabilities, Safe•Connect includes a P2P File Sharing Module that notifies students of prohibited software, helps to educate them on the dangers associated with illegal downloading, and encourages legal online music procurement.

## Centrally Deployed and Managed

Policy Administrators can define and change endpoint computing policies and enforcement rules by network segment or directory services policy group from a centralized policy management interface despite the number of remote or distributed locations. The solution also delivers real-time and historical policy status reporting that provides valuable insight into group or individual policy compliance to Policy Administrators and Help Desk personnel.

Safe•Connect Policy Modules	Key Features
Authentication	Prevents unauthorized users from accessing network resources and participates in Single Sign-On (SSO).
Guest User Management	Automates guest user registration processes that can restrict endpoint devices to Internet-only access for a period of time.
Acceptable Use Policy Auditing	Displays acceptable use policies and gives users the option to accept organization policies prior to accessing network resources.
Anti-Virus	Manages compliance with anti-virus policies.
Anti-Spyware	Manages compliance with anti-spyware software.
Microsoft Patch	Ensures that users are up-to-date with Microsoft OS patches and integrated with existing patch management systems.
P2P File Sharing	Prohibits use of illegal P2P file sharing applications.
Access Point	Manages adherence to rouge access point device policies that utilize Network Access Translation (NAT).
Power Management	Manages compliance with energy saving power settings.
Custom Policy Building	Enables organizations to build custom policies and messaging to address their unique endpoint security enforcement acceptable use standards.
Broadcast Messaging	Delivers real-time, on-demand informational messaging.

### About Impulse Point

Designed for highly scalable and vendor diverse environments, Impulse Point's Safe•Connect™ Network Access Control solution enables organizations to automate and enforce end user authentication, anti-virus, anti-spyware, Microsoft security patches, P2P file sharing, power management, and customer specific endpoint security policies. The result is a more secure, reliable, and predictable IT infrastructure. Impulse Point ([www.impulse.com](http://www.impulse.com)) is headquartered in Florida and is one of Tampa Bay's premier technology innovators.



### About the University of Rhode Island

Chartered in 1888, the University of Rhode Island offers 12,000 undergraduate and 3,000 graduate students a strong core of traditional academic disciplines with a multidisciplinary emphasis on research that affects people in their daily lives. With nationally and internationally known faculty engaged in a broad range of teaching, research and outreach activities, URI is renowned in many areas, including biotechnology; oceanography; marine and environmental sciences; engineering; and public health promotion. Outreach is at the core of the University's role as a land grant, sea grant, and urban grant university.

For more information, visit [www.uri.edu](http://www.uri.edu)

