

FREDERIX HOTSPOT GMBH CASE STUDY

Located in Hanover, Germany, Frederix Hotspot GmbH is the developer of smart, cloud-based WLAN hotspot technologies intended to digitize cities, municipalities, and companies. Their solutions offer the ability to scale services, making it as easy as possible for their clients and their reach of 20 million end users per month.



Christian Schnatz says he has spent his entire life trying to find “smarter” solutions. When he was a child, Christian started building custom PCs for family and friends and realized IT “could solve many problems.” Now, as the CTO of Frederix Hotspot GmbH, Christian's drive to find those smart solutions has helped him in his role to support hundreds of customers all over Europe.

Together with CEO Jonathan Sauppe, Frederix Hotspot GmbH has used its expertise in digitalization, networking, and Wi-Fi to help cities, municipalities, and schools on what they call an “individual path into the digital future.”

A BUMPY ROAD BECOMES WORTH TRAVELING

This path, however, did not come without any challenges. Christian made several attempts to bring a fast and easy content filtering solution to their customers. They started with a proxy-based HTTP/HTTPS content filter, but it was not sustainable.

“The growing amount of HTTPS sessions, we faced the issue that we were no longer able to filter HTTPS content without breaking the certificate chain or installing customer certificates on any client device. As a provider of public Wi-Fi Networks, this is, of course, not possible for use. So we had to find a smarter way. That's where we came up with DNS-based filtering,” he said.

Over the course of that year, they used many different products, but none of them scaled the way they had hoped. In their search for another provider, Frederix Hotspot GmbH found that DNSFilter was able to meet their needs.

“The onboarding was very easy, and the communication with the DNSFilter team was always fast and pleasant. We have been customers for more than two years now,” Christian said. “Especially the scaling of the backend and the well-documented API was exactly what we needed.”

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CHRISTIAN SCHNATZ

CTO

DNSFILTER MAKES IT EASY AND FAST

For Frederix Hotspot GmbH, Christian said DNSFilter has made it very simple to provide scalable content filtering for their customers when there is any policy change. They can manage a completely remote network without having to update hundreds of appliances. "They made it so much easier, especially for our support team."

Christian remarked about DNSFilter's time to resolution: "I only had to raise one support ticket in the last year, and this ticket was a bug, which was fixed in less than 24 hours. I mean, what should I say? I never expected the bug to be fixed that fast."

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THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WI-FI

While convenient and now everpresent, public Wi-Fi hotspots [can leave people vulnerable to phishing and malware attacks](#). By implementing DNSFilter's security, Frederix Hotspot GmbH has been able to block content at the DNS layer, meaning fewer threats get through. Since a DNS request is a first passageway of sorts, the website is never even seen by the end user.

With so many clients and their customers using DNSFilter, Frederix Hotspot GmbH has to think on a larger scope, currently blocking categories like Adult Content, Terrorism & Hate, P2P & Illegal, Weapons, Hacking & Cracking, Drugs, and Gambling. Christian highlighted DNSFilter's [Global Block policies](#), as a "real blessing," for it has allowed him to configure sub-organizations only one time, making it faster to deploy new clients.

Christian also highlighted features like [AppAware](#), DNSFilter's ability to block by application in one click, and [Safe Search](#), which allows Frederix Hotspot GmbH to enable content filtering on search engines.

Offering public Wi-Fi and guest Wi-Fi to entire cities, schools, and municipalities comes with it a great duty to protect citizens—especially children—Christian explained.

"For us, the most important part is the child protection. Especially in public Wi-Fi, we have to take responsibility to ensure child protection," he said.

In the United States, schools have to maintain [CIPA compliance](#). In Germany, while there are [protections](#) to keep children from accessing harmful media, there are no federal laws blocking or censoring the internet. Christian said because of this, Frederix Hotspot GmbH's company policy is "better [to] be strict."

While the number of categories Frederix Hotspot GmbH blocks is higher for schools, Christian said there needs to be a balanced policy approach for all of their clients: "For public Wi-Fi in cities/municipalities, it is, of course, very important. But we have to find a good middle way here... we block the categories I mentioned, but some customers do want more or less."

He added, "For us, it's very important to have an easy and flexible system, and that's exactly what DNSFilter can offer us!"