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UDG Healthcare plc

UDG Healthcare plc gains speed, agility and high performance with secure web gateway

Founded in 1948, UDG Healthcare plc provides outsourced services to over 300 healthcare companies around the world, employing 8,700 globally. It is a leading international partner of choice for the healthcare industry, delivering advisory, communication, commercial, clinical and packaging services. The group operates within 26 countries, across two divisions: Ashfield and Sharp.

Having recently experienced exponential growth, UDG Healthcare increased its reliance and adoption of Information Technology to gain competitive advantage. This resulted in an increased IT infrastructural complexity within the company. With 5,500 mobile and desktop users globally, the company's international workforce has become increasingly flexible and very keen to get fast, secure access to web apps and custom business applications. Therefore the need to protect endpoint devices from web-based threats was critical to business continuity.

This need for increased cybersecurity was compounded by the ever-increasing number of cyber-attacks experienced by healthcare organizations, who typically handle a significant volume of business-sensitive data. Subsequently, the need to protect UDG Healthcare's corporate data from web-based threats was also crucial to their business growth strategy.

Significant obstacles to implementing effective security were apparent, including the support of current hardware appliances, costs, complexity, and demanding network performance. To address these, UDG identified a requirement for a cloud security solution to deliver continuous round the clock protection across the extended organization.

UDG Healthcare requirements:

- 100% cloud-based solution
- Implementation: minimal interruption and impact on customer operations
- Offer scalability and growth, accommodating future expansion
- Deliver equal protection for mobile devices
- Provide web filtering and web based anti-malware filtering
- Advanced threat protection and sandboxing for web
- Easily monitor and enforce internet usage policies for employees

BSI Case Study: UDG Healthcare plc

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The challenge

The primary aim of this project was to protect a large and diverse group of users operating across a broad range of territories, using a variety of devices.

A key challenge emerged in protecting this diverse community from internet threats while ensuring minimal business downtime or any negative impact on customer operations.

UDG also wanted to increase employee productivity by supporting mobility but felt constrained due to latency and an inability to manage employee internet usage via smartphones.

The proliferation of web applications called for more granular policies that varied across all countries. The challenges and costs associated with creating web filtering lists and maintaining an appliance-based solution in different locations became unnecessary.

The new solution had to be capable of applying different policies to subgroups, while filtering and blocking known infected sites separately from policy-based filtering. Additionally, the solution had to provide cloud sandboxing capabilities to counter previously unknown threats.

The solution

After a competitive tendering process involving the evaluation of leading vendors, UDG Healthcare selected BSI and Zscaler to implement a cloud security solution.

Not all cloud security vendors offer comprehensive security like Zscaler, which includes protection against external threats such as malware and internal threats like data loss. Zscaler's offering ensured the implementation of an integrated policy to manage all components of the security process.

The solution delivers a security stack as a service from the cloud, eliminating the cost and complexity of traditional secure web gateway approaches.

By moving security to a globally distributed cloud, Zscaler brings the internet gateway closer to the UDG user, thus providing a faster and more enhanced experience. Scalability is also central to the principles of the solution.

As a full-service security practice, BSI is uniquely placed to provide extensive security advice, remediation support and identification of information security issues using the Zscaler platform.

The benefits

- Award-winning cloud security solution with URL filtering and firewall protection
- Applies equal policies to users on their desktop, laptop, and mobile devices regardless of their location
- Flexibility in access control rules that allow policies to be applied by user, group, department, location and time
- Endpoint protection from malware and advanced threats
- Supports granular levels of URL filtering
- Powerful reporting engine that provides extensive analytics
- Implementations are easier and timelines are shorter than traditional appliance-based solutions
- High-speed cloud-scale infrastructure that provides web security with low latency
- Zscaler platform scales elastically with consumption
- Eliminates backhauling of traffic to the central data centre

"It was very important to work with a partner that knows the product extremely well and has carried out deployments in organizations of similar size and composition."

Robert Early, Group Information Security Officer, UDG Healthcare plc

Measurable results

BSI and Zscaler implemented a secure web gateway solution initially for 2,000 office-based users and 1,000 remote users.

The ease of deployment assured a rapid and successful launch of the Zscaler Internet Security platform across UDG Healthcare's various territories with minimal interruptions or impact for customer operations. For the purpose of being cost effective and to achieve high performance access when needed, a mix of local and central internet connectivity was established rather than backhauling all traffic to a central site.

Zscaler provides an interface between the users and the internet, protecting the network from cyberthreats, stopping intellectual property leaks, ensuring compliance with corporate content and access policies.

Since mobile data connections no longer require a VPN and traffic doesn't have to be sent to a main data centre for appliance-based security scanning, UDG saves considerable traffic bandwidth while delivering an improved user experience.

The deployment proved to be very simple as the solution was 100% integrated with existing systems, which facilitated automation and transparency during the seamless process.

UDG is now using a cloud-based web filtering solution that scales with elasticity to the different divisions' unique traffic demands, providing round the clock availability, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year. The extensive scanning functionality blocks malware threats including viruses, botnets and zero-day exploits, whether a user is connecting from their desktop, a laptop or a mobile device.

"Zscaler supports our highly mobile workforce without the need to use VPNs to connect back to the office. Traditional, hardware-based filtering services often require either a VPN backhaul or provide a cloud filtering component that have some limitations. Zscaler provides the full filtering feature set to all users, regardless of location."

Robert Early, Group Information Security Officer, UDG Healthcare plc