SOPHOS

Benedictine Monks of Cleveland Put Faith in Sophos XG Firewall to Protect Their Network

Customer-at-a-Glance

Benedictine Order of Cleveland

Industry
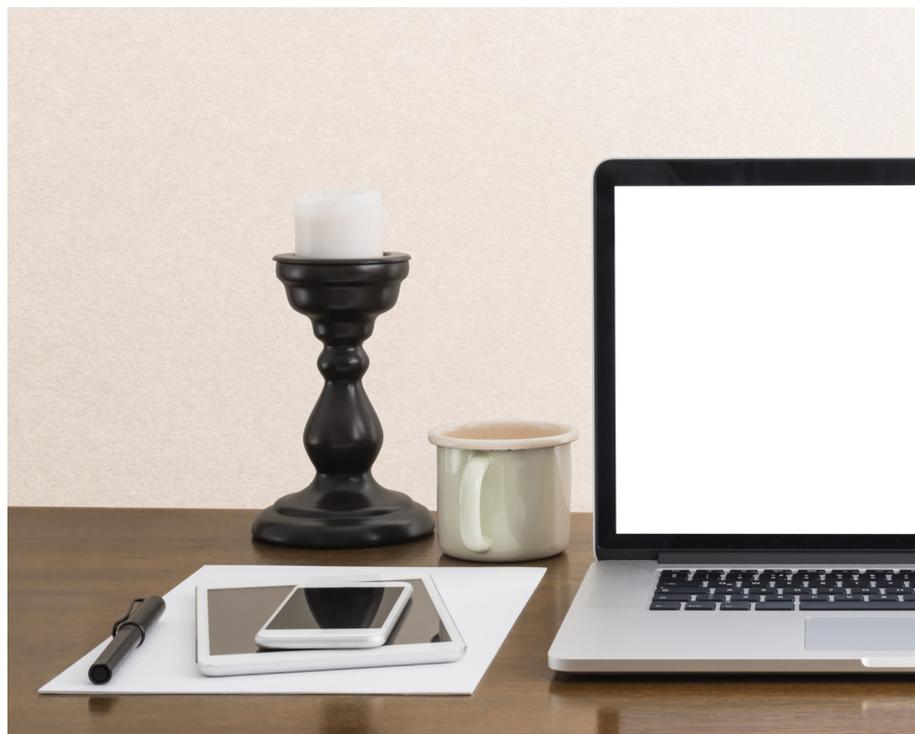Religious organization

Number of Users
23

Sophos Solutions
Sophos Synchronized Security
Sophos Central Endpoint Protection Advanced
Sophos Central Server Protection Advanced
Sophos Intercept X

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Brother Philip Petrow
Benedictine Monks of Cleveland

The Benedictine monks of St. Andrew Abbey in Cleveland provide multiple services for their community: Catholic education, parish ministry, upkeep of St. Andrews Abbey, and pastoral service. In addition to operating Benedictine High School for young men in Cleveland and leading Assumption Parish in Ohio's Broadview Heights, they also provide resident chaplain services and assist the staff at the Loyola Retreat House near Akron.

Like many modern monastic orders, the St. Andrew monks use desktops and laptops to help them fulfill their religious duties and mission. To ensure their online activities are secure inside and outside of the monastery, the monks chose Sophos XG Firewall, which offers complete protection through its full suite of network and email security technologies.

Challenges

- ‣ Protection of users and their devices on the go
- ‣ Need for a simpler and more affordable, yet comprehensive security solution
- ‣ Lack of real-time endpoint and network visibility across devices and user locations
- ‣ Concern about zero-day attacks, advanced threats, and malicious emails containing ransomware
- ‣ Improving incident response time quickly isolating infected endpoints

How do you simplify security for users on the go while providing comprehensive protection?

Because their important work frequently takes them to other cities, the monks needed a solution that would protect their users and devices everywhere they go. The monastery had been using Barracuda Networks for email protection and SonicWall firewall technology for web protection, but they were dissatisfied with these solutions because they were not all-inclusive. They required expensive add-ons and upgrades

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as the security needs of the monastery expanded and lacked seamless integration capabilities. Brother Philip Petrow, who manages IT for the Benedictine Order, found these products to be both difficult to use and to manage.

"SonicWall, for example, is a la carte," he explains. "I like package deals — I don't want to keep buying add-ons all the time. I was looking for something that provided a full spectrum of protection and was more affordable."

Prior to introducing Sophos security solutions to the monastery, Brother Philip had successfully deployed it on his own Mac and found it to be not only effective, but also simple to use. Brother Philip concluded that Sophos was the right vendor. "Some of our monks are still learning technology," he explains. "Sophos provides an easy solution. It's transparent. The Sophos XG Firewall automatically puts the bad files into quarantine without any instructions from the user."

Another big plus for the monastery was Sophos XG Firewall's end-to-end, comprehensive protection, which encompasses network, wireless, IPS, VPN, web, application control, email, and web application firewall. In Brother Philip's eyes, this solution provides the breadth of protection he believed the monastery needed to detect and defeat today's advanced threats and zero-day attacks.

Brother Philip also appreciates the on-the-go security needed to support the activities of the monks at different locations. "The laptops travel, so I appreciate that the protection goes with them and isn't just here at the monastery," says Brother Philip.

He discloses switching over was simple — it was just a matter of swapping out the SonicWall hardware with the Sophos appliance and configuring the system. "Not only was it easy, but it's working great and is providing our network and endpoints with a truly effective and consistent defense," he points out.

How do you optimize visibility and resolve security issues efficiently?

The next-generation Sophos XG Firewall provides the Benedictine monks with exceptional performance, security, and control over their network, along with superior visibility. Through the advanced central controller, Brother Philip can easily obtain real-time insights into network activity, users, and applications. With just a few clicks, he can drill down to get hundreds of built-in reports that offer more details into the status of system performance, services, connections, and other parameters.

"I can easily tell who is protected, who had the last update installed, and whether there are any problems," he explains. Brother Philip routinely checks the Sophos Firewall XG dashboard at least once a day to make sure everything is running smoothly.

"If there is a potential risk, Sophos sends me an email notification. From the Sophos Central platform, I can track down the root of the problem. If I am required to clean up malware or a virus, then I can respond almost immediately with Sophos." He adds that he's grateful for the readily available technical support, if it's needed. As the one person to manage IT across the organization, Brother Philip finds Sophos Support an excellent resource.

"Whenever I call with an issue or concern, a technical support representative walks me through everything completely and helps me resolve the matter. All of the Sophos resources I've spoken to are extremely knowledgeable, so I feel very comfortable," says Brother Philip. "Everything has been going well over the phone. The techs get onto the server and do their magic."

What's the best way to coordinate endpoints and the firewall?

While the Sophos XG Firewall's control center provides Brother Philip with the visibility he needs, its Security Heartbeat™ technology, which drives Sophos Synchronized Security, carefully coordinates the monastery's defenses by making sure the endpoints and the firewall are talking to each other. This helps Brother Philip should he need to quickly identify compromised systems and limit network access for them until the problems can be remediated.

For now, Brother Philip is highly satisfied with the Synchronized Security, through Sophos XG Firewall and Sophos Central Endpoint Protection Advanced. He's confident in knowing that monastery's network and endpoints are protected, so his fellow monks can pursue their mission uninterrupted.

"Sophos Synchronized Security offers us the kind of protection we've been looking for," he says. "I can confidently say that I sleep better at night because of it."

What's the best defense against the growing threat of ransomware

Lately, Brother Philip discovered that the monastery's secretaries were receiving quite a number of malicious emails. Opening or clicking on links in some of these could trigger ransomware, a type of malicious software that blocks access to a computer system until money or some other type of ransom is paid. Ransomware is the most prevalent malware attack affecting today's organizations. Verizon reports that ransomware increased by 50% in 2016. [1]

For that reason, Brother Philip has added Sophos Intercept X, which uses CryptoGuard technology to prevent the malicious spontaneous encryption of data — even hijacked files — by ransomware. Once the ransomware is intercepted, CryptoGuard reverts files back to their safe states.

"With the increase of terrorist attacks on religious organizations like churches, ransomware is top of mind at for us the monastery. We want to be sure that we are fully protected against this rising threat. We know that Sophos Intercept X is a valuable addition to our to security toolbox," he concludes.

[1] http://www.cio-today.com/article/index.php?story_id=0020002BH6U2

Start your free trial of Sophos XG Firewall today to get started with Synchronized Security.