Caring for the disabled with elite, affordable security

GravityZone secures personal confidential data

THE CHALLENGE

"Protecting the confidentiality of this personal data is our highest priority," says Marcel Übachs, Head of IT at Lebenshilfe. His team oversees more than 300 Windows clients distributed across housing facilities, the administrative building and the workshop, in addition to 45 virtual servers and 650 mailboxes hosted on a Microsoft Exchange Server.

The association's IT assets are vital to service: computer malfunctions would force staff to manually document their activities and electronically capture the information later. The same applies to medication plans. The workshop uses an ERP system to keep withdrawal and inventory records on hand. Losing any of this data would severely disrupt operations: both human resources and accounting are entirely software-based.

Several years ago, budget pressures forced the IT department to replace the software it relied on for protection against malware: the vendor decided to discontinue a program that allowed Lebenshilfe e. V. to use it under a campus license, raising costs 15-fold. This prompted decision-makers to search for a new, affordable security solution.

THE SOLUTION

Bitdefender's test reviews piqued the interest of the head of IT. The software delivered excellent test results, was reasonably priced, and required little in system resources on both clients and servers. The software was installed by Bitdefender's partner QKomm GmbH and the IT team at Lebenshilfe was impressed with its detection rates and intuitive usability from the start.

Übachs was delighted to become a beta tester of the Bitdefender GravityZone solution in early 2015: "Since we must protect several Hyper-V virtualized servers, the idea of an external scan appliance is the perfect fit for our requirements," explains Übachs. Even for servers, GravityZone only requires installation of a lightweight agent that serves to generate the hash values of all files on the hard drive, which are then forwarded to the external scan server.

Assessment of the files is carried out by this Ubuntu-based appliance, taking a load off clients and servers and preventing performance degradations. The appliance also monitors Lebenshilfe's entire network traffic at the packet level, supporting the firewall's search for malicious software. The security controls also met the approval of the external data protection officer in charge of regular security audits.

The security concept is completed by Bitdefender's Security for Exchange module, which Lebenshilfe had eventually implemented as well. It works directly on the mail server to search for malicious attachments and content such as links to phishing sites.

Lebenshilfe Heinsberg

Lebenshilfe Heinsberg e.V., a German association dedicated to the advancement of people with physical and mental disabilities, provides personal care for more than 1,800-plus patients. Employees of the association deal daily with highly sensitive client files, diagnoses and nursing records of the people under their care.

Industry
Healthcare

Headquarters
Rastatt, Germany

Users
800 educators, therapists, medical staff, technicians, craftsmen and administrative personnel

Results
- Blocked unusual attacks without interruption to users
- Eliminated need to install agents on clients
- Extended security to mobile devices

THE RESULTS

Übachs is confident that Bitdefender GravityZone is the perfect solution for their requirements: "The software detects and eliminates malware on our computers without the user having to step in," he points out. He explains that they configured the agents in a way that users are not bothered with alerts on their devices. "They would probably just close them without looking at them anyway," he says. His colleagues are notified of any infections, but usually no user interaction is required. The AV software works quietly and reliably in the background.

GravityZone can block even the most unusual attacks: Lebenshilfe hosts several websites on its web server. One of them was maintained with an obsolete version of the Joomla content management system that allowed an attacker to upload a malicious script to the server. The script tried to automatically infect the computer of anyone visiting the website with malware (exploit kit). But when a Lebenshilfe employee opened the website, the local agent detected the threat right away, leading to the discovery of the server infection.

The IT team of four is also pleased with the ease of administration: the web interface makes it easy to manage all aspects of the solution from any device without having to install an administrator console. Its Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) integration allows them to use their existing Windows login to authenticate themselves with the security solution. And the integration and management of endpoints could not be easier: GravityZone retrieves all information it needs from Active Directory, sparing the company the time and resources spent installing the agents on the clients and manually adding them to the AV solution. "Bitdefender's software has such great usability on a day-to-day basis that in all these years we never required even one day of training. The release upgrade was absolutely smooth too," says Übachs.

Now that more employees at Lebenshilfe use smartphones or tablets, Übachs plans to extend security to mobile devices as well. He foresees no issues with the integration. "It's not just convenience that made us stay with Bitdefender for all these years. We place our utmost confidence in the effectiveness of their protection," Übachs concludes.

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— Marcel Übachs, Head of IT, Lebenshilfe Heinsberg e.V.

Bitdefender Footprint
- GravityZone Enterprise Security
- GravityZone On-Premises Management Console

IT Environment
- Microsoft Exchange
- Microsoft Hyper-V

Operating System
- Microsoft Windows