Commonwealth of Virginia Future-Proofs With FireEye

FACTS AT A GLANCE

INDURY

🏛 Government

CUSTOMER PROFILE
Located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States, the Commonwealth of Virginia is home to over 8.3 million people. Richmond is the capital and the state boundaries include the famous Blue Ridge Mountains and the Chesapeake Bay.

Business challenge

The state is the primary holder of a great deal of personally identifiable information (PII) for its residents; birth and death records, tax returns, immunization documentation, health information, etc. Karen R. Jackson, Secretary of Technology for the state, noted, "We spend a lot of time trying to stay abreast of how we can keep PII secure because even one slip-up would demolish the trust our citizens have in us."

"With the heightened protection from solutions like FireEye, we're committed to making Virginia the nation's cyber leader."

— **Karen R. Jackson,** Secretary of Technology, Commonwealth of Virginia

There is a balancing act between securing the data and enabling authorized access to the information. Secretary Jackson explained, "We have to share information both at the federal level as well as with counties, cities and other government bodies; there also is a level of data exchange with the private sector. We all interrelate and if a link in that chain gets damaged and compromised, it affects us all very negatively.

"I consider insider threats to be one of the biggest hazards we face. We have almost 100,000 state employees and, even without any malicious intent, it just becomes a numbers game. We are seeing an influx of phishing and all it takes is one person to inadvertently click on one email to unleash malware that could cause a lot of problems for us."

Michael Watson, chief information security officer for the state, concurred, "To give a sense of scale: We have over 60,000 endpoints, 4,000 to 5,000 servers, a petabyte and half of data with large quantities of new information arriving daily, and almost a gigabit and half of data being shared every day. Because of this, we needed to supplement our existing defenses with additional high-quality security tools that are efficient, effective, accurate and low overhead."

Solution

The Commonwealth of Virginia selected the FireEye® Network Threat Prevention Platform and FireEye® Malware Analysis (AX) Platform as key components of its new security infrastructure. The former enables the analysis of all suspicious inbound and outbound Web traffic for malware to thwart infiltration, and the latter gives security analysts hands-on control with a powerful auto-configured test environment to safely execute and inspect advanced malware, zero-day, and advanced persistent threat (APT) attacks.

"The FireEye Network Threat Prevention Platform was immediately able to identify a lot of malicious malware that had been entering our environment," Watson recounted. "Some of it we didn't know about in the first place and we were able to stop anything malicious occurring before it ended up hitting our endpoints. So straightaway we saw the cost savings in preventing the attacks and the gains in efficiency just from having FireEye protection.

"Instantly containing and blocking those types of attacks, with no impact on the sharing of information that we're needing to accomplish, is a huge advantage for us."

Business benefits

With large volumes of data transfer going on daily, Watson's team was unable to analyze everything. He observed, "We have a lot of binary executables that we don't necessarily get time to analyze but FireEye helps focus our efforts just on the suspicious elements and enables us to safely investigate their true nature and intent.

"The reporting also is very nice to have: There's lots of wonderful information in there as far as being able to say 'okay, well this piece of malware does X, Y or Z; this is what the impact would be; are we seeing anything else like it?' The Malware Analysis Platform delivers a wealth of data to use for further investigation."

Secretary Jackson noted, "We are the first state to adopt the NIST cyber security framework, and we're also the first state to declare ourselves compliant and a formal participant in the newly created ISAO [information sharing and analysis organizations] initiative. With the heightened protection from solutions like FireEye, we're committed to making Virginia the nation's cyber leader."

Vision

She summarized, "When we put tools in place we do it with an eye toward the future, we don't buy just for today; we buy for five years out. And so when we make those investments — like with our FireEye security solutions — we're securing ourselves now and into the future."

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