Cybersecurity for School Systems: How the Marple Newtown District Gained Full Visibility of Its Network, Endpoints and Email Servers

INDUSTRY
K-12 Education

HEADQUARTERS
Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

COMPANY SIZE
3,700 students; 1,000 employees

OVERVIEW

Marple Newtown School District is a K-12 public school district in southeastern Pennsylvania with four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. The district provides accelerated and Advanced Placement courses and excels in visual and performing arts.

CHALLENGE

Cyberattackers are increasingly targeting schools. In the U.S. education sector, ransomware incidents in particular have sharply risen in recent months. For the Marple Newtown School District, safeguarding students' and employees' personal, academic, financial and health data has grown increasingly complex as threats continue to escalate.

OUR SOLUTION

Quantum
Deep Learning & AI Driven Network Security

Harmony
Highest Level of Security for Remote Users

Horizon
Prevention-First Security Operations

> Check Point gives us an all-in-one solution that enables us to take a holistic approach to security. We have comprehensive capabilities at our fingertips that integrate seamlessly. With a 360-degree view, we can protect every aspect of our environment.
>
> *Christopher Lee, Director of Technology, Marple Newtown School District*

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"We're responsible to students, families and the community for protecting data," said Christopher Lee, Director of Technology for Marple Newtown School District. "With the growing frequency of attacks, we need to ensure that we are implementing superior security capabilities while making security easy to manage for our technology team."

Over the course of a year, the district analyzed its security infrastructure and evaluated new solutions that would fit within its resources and budget. After several proof-of-concept deployments, Lee saw that Check Point was detecting threats that other solutions weren't.

SOLUTION

Lee chose several Check Point solutions to execute the district's security roadmap through a unified platform approach. "Check Point gives us an all-in-one solution that enables us to take a holistic approach to security," said Lee. "We have comprehensive capabilities at our fingertips that integrate seamlessly, and with a 360-degree view, we can protect every aspect of our environment."

First, Lee onboarded Horizon Network Detection and Response (NDR), a plug-and-play solution that allows his team to quickly discover and remediate malware, phishing, data exfiltration, zero-days and other threats. After an easy configuration, they gained real-time, network-wide visibility within minutes of going live.

Having shored up the district's network security posture, Lee's next concern was addressing the security of Marple Newtown's email servers. Operationalizing Harmony Email & Collaboration, which reduces the number of phishing attacks that reach the inbox by an average of 99.2%, was a giant step forward in the team's effort to secure its lines of communication. "What's so unique and impressive is how it actually looks at the emails and extracts malicious software from attachments," he said.

For perimeter protection, Lee selected Quantum Security Gateways based on their ability to guard against the most sophisticated cyber threats. One of his favorite Quantum features has been SandBlast Zero-Day protection, which provides comprehensive protection against emerging threats while reducing overhead and driving team productivity. "We rely especially on SandBlast for threat emulation and extraction as well as its anti-ransomware and forensic components," said Lee. By detecting and sandboxing zero-day threats in real-time, SandBlast preemptively sanitizes email and web downloads for the district's users.

Rounding off Lee's Check Point solution stack is Harmony Endpoint, which defends servers, desktops and laptops from breaches and data compromise district-wide. "Quantum and Harmony Endpoint give us far greater confidence in our security," said Lee. The solution's flexibility allows the IT team to tailor its features to the unique requirements of any device or use case. For example, while elementary and secondary schools may activate malware protection for their endpoints, secondary schools can also use URL blocking and other features that serve their specific needs.

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OUTCOME

The district saw immediate results upon implementing its new Check Point solutions. Within a few hours of onboarding, Horizon NDR alerted the team to a rogue server that had been invisible to its previous security solutions. Not only did Horizon NDR identify the device, but it also provided the team with actionable information. "With Check Point Horizon NDR, we have full visibility across the entire internal network, which we lacked before," said Lee. "Immediately, we were able to locate and decommission the server which was sending out key logging and other data to an external source."

Since onboarding the Check Point solution stack, Lee has been able to automate and streamline his team's workflows with minimal friction. "Despite security being so complex, Check Point made it very easy to understand," said Lee. "From the user interface to implementation techniques and how it works, it was really easy to grasp."

For a team that has as much ground to cover as Lee's does, the ability to do more with less has been crucial. Check Point's best-in-class technology solutions help his team minimize unnecessary manual effort by automatically detecting even the most advanced attacks — and reducing false positives. And with the expert guidance of Check Point's responsive support team, he knows his team is getting the most out of its security stack. "A key benefit of Check Point is the support and the knowledge base they provide us, not only from a technology standpoint but also in best practices," he said.

ABOUT CHECK POINT

Check Point Software Technologies Ltd. is the trusted cybersecurity solutions provider for over 100,000 SMBs, corporate enterprises and governments globally. With an industry-leading catch rate for zero-day, ransomware and generation V cyberattacks, Check Point Infinity's unified platform delivers unparalleled threat visibility, intelligence and prevention across enterprise environments—from remote users and cloud deployments to network perimeters and data centers. Together, our solutions work seamlessly to drive productivity, reduce costs and enable real-time security monitoring.

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