AALBORG MUNICIPALITY PROTECTS ITS EMAIL AND COLLABORATION ENVIRONMENTS WITH POWERFUL, COST-EFFECTIVE CHECK POINT HARMONY

Aalborg Kommune

Organization

Aalborg Municipality is in the North Jutland Region of Denmark and is the country's fourth-largest city.

Challenge

- Ensure outstanding, consistent email protection across all users and devices
- Simplify email security for users
- Integrate with Microsoft 365 and ITSM solution

Solution

- Check Point Harmony Email & Collaboration
- Check Point Professional Services

Benefits

- Deployed advanced email and collaboration protection across municipality in just four weeks
- Integrated seamlessly with ITSM system and reduced daily support tickets from 25 to two
- Increased security visibility and awareness for users and support teams

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"Our users, support team, and even our citizens have gained heightened awareness of email security. I would definitely recommend Check Point Harmony Email & Collaboration. It's easy to deploy and use and we're looking forward to continuing implementing new features."

- René Ellersgaard, Systems Engineer, Aalborg Municipality

Overview

The city of Aalborg dates from the sixth century, when it began as a harbor. Its reputation as a trading center flourished during the Viking Age and Middle Ages. Today, Aalborg Municipality has evolved from a trading and industrial center to a knowledge economy based on technology, education, and services.

Business Challenge

Seeking Consistent, Outstanding Email Protection

The Aalborg Municipality IT team supports users and systems across more than 800 locations. Approximately 17,000 users work from a wide range of devices. All told, the IT team manages 19,000 individual and shared mailboxes—as well as the municipality's Microsoft 365 solution. Users access Outlook email and Teams collaboration applications either directly from their devices or through a browser on tablets, mobile devices, and thin clients. Regardless of device, everyone is targeted by high volumes of phishing and Business Email Compromise (BEC) cyberattacks. Users required continuous assistance in determining whether to open email messages, creating a burden on the support team.

CHECK POINT

The municipality had been using Microsoft Defender for email security, but when it was time to renew the license, coverage terms had changed. Tablet, thin-client, and mobile users no longer had the same level of protection as users who accessed email directly from desktop systems. The subscription cost also increased significantly.

"First, we needed to ensure consistent email security for all users while remaining cost effective," said René Ellersgaard, Systems Engineer for Aalborg Municipality. "At the same time, we wanted to relieve the burden on our support team by making it easier for users to manage quarantined email. We began considering new email security solutions."

Outstanding email security and cost effectiveness were Aalborg's primary considerations. A new solution had to be easy to use for end users and the support team. Aalborg also wanted seamless integration with Microsoft 365 and its cloud-based IT system management (ITSM) solution. Finally, the team wanted to work with a known, trusted vendor.

"We evaluated several solutions, including Microsoft," said Ellersgaard. "Orange Cyberdefense, our managed security service provider, told us about Check Point Harmony Email & Collaboration. After talking with other partners and doing further research, we decided to implement a Proof of Concept."

SOLUTION

Easy Setup and Use

Working with Check Point Professional Services, Aalborg initially tested Harmony Email with 80 users and mailboxes. One week later, they expanded the test to 2,000 users and then to 4,000 users. After four weeks everyone across the municipality was enrolled.
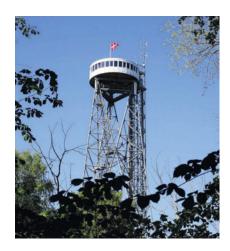
Harmony Email & Collaboration provides complete protection for Microsoft 365, as well as Google Workspace and other collaboration or file-sharing apps. It blocks advanced phishing, malware, BEC, account takeover, and ransomware attacks before they reach users' inboxes, and it protects sensitive business data from leaving the organization. Organizations typically experience a 99% reduction in phishing attacks that reach mailboxes.

"Implementation went great," said Ellersgaard. "We were up and running within a day. Over the next few weeks as we expanded coverage, we also integrated Harmony Email with our ITSM solution. With a few tweaks, Harmony Email worked seamlessly in our organization."

Seamless Integration

Harmony Email & Collaboration integrates with Aalborg's ITSM product to automate review of suspicious emails. When users are notified that they have a quarantined email, they can decide to release it or not. If they decide to release the email, just a click automatically creates a ticket in the ITSM. A

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support team member looks at the questionable email and decides whether it is safe to release.

"ITSM integration is the key to our success," said Ellersgaard. "It gives users the power to decide whether to accept an email or not—which greatly reduces the number of calls for support and enables quick response. The integration also gives us the opportunity to have a dialog with our end users and provide additional education on threats."

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Benefits

Protection for Everyone

Harmony Email now protects all Aalborg users, whether they use Outlook email, web access without an Outlook client, or Microsoft Teams. Built-in AI capabilities continuously scan inbound emails using contextual analysis, anomaly detection, and anti-phishing algorithms to detect BEC and employee impersonation. Harmony Email then creates custom threat profiles by learning communication patterns, relationships, and historical emails within users' inboxes.

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Reduced Support Time

Before Harmony Email, the support team had little visibility into threats while having to make decisions about which emails to release. Now the team now can see the types of emails coming in and is highly aware of current spam campaigns and the current threat landscape.

"Harmony Email requires minimal effort from our support team," said Ellersgaard. "We've gone from 20-25 release requests per day from users to one or two. When we do see a request, our team can quickly discern harmless emails from real threats."

Increased Awareness

As the AI capabilities of Harmony Email learned the municipality's email patterns, users and the support team gained valuable awareness of email safety and current cyberthreats. As a result, users are more aware of sensitive data that citizens send in emails to the municipality. They have begun helping citizens understand the risks of sending sensitive data in emails and suggesting better ways of sharing that data.

"Our users, support team, and even our citizens have gained heightened awareness of email security," said Ellersgaard. "I would definitely recommend Check Point Harmony Email & Collaboration. It's easy to deploy and use and we're looking forward to continuously implementing new features."