

STONESOFT



Case Study - North Cheshire Hospitals Trust

StoneGate Platform to Replace and Strengthen the Firewall Security

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NHS Trust adds true resilience to a security infrastructure covering multiple acute hospital sites, by adding Stonesoft's clustered firewall and end-to-end centralised management system

The North Cheshire Hospitals Trust, an NHS Trust providing high quality health care services to the people of Halton, Warrington and neighbouring communities, improved the resilience and manageability of its IT firewall infrastructure by deploying Stonesoft's StoneGate Platform.

The Trust is located within the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority, and covers an area of approximately 100 square miles, providing accessible, patient focused healthcare to a population of nearly 310,000 individuals.

Crucially, patients, staff and IT systems are spread across two major geographically disparate sites. Halton Hospital and Warrington Hospitals are situated approximately 11 miles apart within North Cheshire in the North West of England, between the cities of Manchester and Liverpool. The North Cheshire Hospitals Trust is committed to an ongoing programme of modernisation of both medical and support services, including IT infrastructure, consolidating and integrating services across the two hospital sites.

Following a tendering exercise, the NHS Trust decided Nviron, an established technology reseller and specialist security systems integrator, would take responsibility for the project, including supply and implementation of the chosen technology.

When it embarked on the project to deploy improved firewall precautions, the North Cheshire Hospitals Trust decided immediately that it needed a solution with a very high level of built-in resiliency, and put this requirement at the top of its list of priorities for any replacement system. Other items on a lengthy and stringent list of requirements for the replacement system included active clustering across the two hospital sites, ISP Multi-homing, centralised cluster management, and all-important EAL4 certification.

Steve Nicholson, IT services manager for North Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust, said, "When we looked for true clustering and resilience for access to off-site national hospital systems, StoneGate was the only solution we found that would meet every one of our requirements."

The StoneGate High Availability Firewall boasts a number of key benefits that each contributed to meet the security demands of the NHS Trust. These include: increased reliability with built-in Multi-homing; a clustered, load-balancing solution; simplified configuration and recovery resulting in fewer errors and reduced time; updates of the global system in one safe and simple step from a remote workstation; simplified rule bases meaning better policy enforcement, faster performance and fewer administrator tasks; and the ability to

restore an entire system in minutes rather than hours.

The NHS trust worked with established technology reseller and specialist security systems integrator Nviron on the project to choose and implement the new system. Stonesoft's StoneGate Platform has been Nviron's strategic firewall solution of choice for a number of years, and in its expert opinion was the only product that could meet the complex multi-site requirements of the North Cheshire Hospitals Trust. StoneGate's ability to load-balance over two geographic sites was extremely attractive to Nviron, which was able to demonstrate and implement true resilience for NHS.net links via lines from both BT and Cable & Wireless.

Health care organisations operate from specialist sites with unique security requirements. Often a trust especially will need to collect, archive, combine, and share data across different parts of the organisation confidentially and efficiently to provide the best possible care for patients, and the best possible resources for staff. At the same time, these sites need to ensure compliance with government policies and regulations, often on tight budgets NHS Trusts must consider both data security and data availability. They need to ensure for example, that patient information is instantly available when needed, but conversely, managing patients' privacy and data is also of paramount concern. Both these provisions must be met securely and efficiently to provide the best possible care and privacy for patients, while ensuring a high-level of authorised information access for staff.

Stonesoft is experienced in providing for the security and continuity needs of health care organisations. It can provide the products, services and support required to ensure: secures transmission and handling of health care data; reduced reporting burden with automated, scheduled, and detailed reports; significantly reduced security administration costs with intelligent centralised management; low administration costs; reduced risk of non-compliance with regulations; and improved productivity due to increased medical staff satisfaction and utilisation of IT systems. Other key benefits for systems integration from

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NHS Trust



Nviron's point of view included StoneGate's core central management platform, and its ability to safe remote upgrade from that single management system. Nviron believes that this is a key consideration when deploying a firewall infrastructure across geographically disparate sites.

The main aim of the project was a simple one, to make the firewall infrastructure at NCHT as resilient as possible, but additional stipulations over resilience and management meant that only Stonesoft's StoneGate Platform was up to the job. The trust was convinced that StoneGate was the only solution with resilience at the core of its functionality, unlike competing products that it felt started with a firewall and then worked on adding resilience to the basic product. Likewise, the Trust believed StoneGate was the only solution that managed the whole cluster rather than the distinct firewalls, which it was concerned, would leave the sites vulnerable to small differences in the configuration of each device causing major problems in the clusters' functionality. StoneGate's central management platform avoids this problem, removing the need for very time-consuming and fiddly programming tasks.

Steve Nicholson added: “We had anticipated the transition from two very busy, individual firewalls from two separate vendors to one consolidated system to be problematic, however, the actual implementation and configuration was relatively smooth. This was not only due to the StoneGate product design and Stonesoft's certified training and skills transfer, but also the invaluable assistance of Nviron's team which ensured that there was not only comprehensive planning before implementation but appropriate post-implementation support.”

The Stonesoft StoneGate Platform is now fully operational across Halton and Warrington Hospital sites at the North Cheshire Hospitals Trust.

About North Cheshire Hospitals Trust

Founded in 2001, North Cheshire Hospitals Trust aims at providing high quality health care to the people of Halton, Warrington and surrounding areas. It aims also at sustaining, developing and increasing the range of health services provided locally. The Trust is located within the area covered by Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority.

In 2004, the Trust was awarded two stars which is a reflection of the dedication and hard work of its staff. Every healthcare organisation in England that treats NHS patients must assess itself against a set of 24 'core' standards and report the results back to the Healthcare Commission. The final declaration must be shared with relevant stakeholders, including voluntary and community groups.

www.northcheshirehospitals.nhs.uk/

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Stonesoft Experience

Stonesoft Corporation (HEX: SFT1V) is an innovative provider of integrated network security and business continuity. Stonesoft is a global company focused on enterprise level customers requiring advanced network security and always-on business connectivity with low TCO, best price-to-performance ratio, and highest ROI.

StoneGate™ Platform unifies firewall, VPN and IPS, blending network security, end-to-end availability and award-winning load balancing into a unified and centrally managed system for distributed enterprises. Founded in 1990, Stonesoft Corporation has corporate headquarters in Helsinki, Finland; Americas headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia; and Asia Pacific headquarters in Singapore.

The StoneGate Platform

The StoneGate Platform lowers the risks of doing business in a digitalized world. StoneGate appliances and software provide secured, optimized, and resilient connectivity for converged services, while preventing damage from attacks. With the help of unified management you can cost-efficiently manage and monitor the security and connectivity in your network.

Secured, Optimized, and Resilient Connectivity

With StoneGate Firewall/VPN, you can connect your offices with each other reliably and fault-tolerantly using Site-to-Site VPN, ISP Multi-homing with Multi-Link VPN Technology, Firewall/VPN and IPS Sensor Clustering and Load Balancing, Server Load Balancing, and Quality of Service and Bandwidth Management

Preventing the Damage From Attacks

StoneGate guards your network with StoneGate Firewall and with StoneGate IPS. StoneGate Firewall enforces your security policy, prevents denial-of-service attacks, and drops malicious http traffic. StoneGate IPS stops attacks and non-authorized traffic as well as protects unpatched servers before they are updated.

Unified Management

The StoneGate Management Center delivers an innovative and holistic approach for role-based administration through a single, centralized management system. Forming the heart of the StoneGate Platform, the Management Center provides unified tools for Security Enforcement, for Security Surveillance, and for Systems and Data management.

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