



Macdonald Hotels

Secure remote access with AppGate Network Security

Background

Since its inception in 1990, Macdonald Hotels has expanded quickly from its initial two hotels in Scotland to over 60 hotels based in some of the best locations across England, Scotland and Wales. The estate is extremely diverse, ranging from elegant manor houses to modern city-centre hotels, all at the top end of the market.



As the business expanded, there was a growing need for staff to be able to work remotely while travelling, at meetings with partners or customers, or from home. Their existing SSL VPN solution was found to have a number of limitations. So Macdonald Hotels took the decision to look for a new network security solution: a solution which would work with their existing IT network infrastructure, provide a secure, remote-access environment for staff across the hotel group, and have the scope to support the future growth and evolution of the business.

Requirement

For Macdonald Hotels, the key requirement was to ensure the security of their network. The solution needed to provide a user-friendly environment for staff and managers to use corporate laptops to access the network from any location. However, at the same time it was vital that data such as customer information held on central databases remained confidential, and corporate applications were protected from unauthorised access. So the solution also needed to deliver effective security, not only for the connection but also for the devices themselves thus protecting the internal network, as laptops could be used both on the inside and on the outside.

Finally, with staff based at locations across the country, Macdonald Hotels required a solution that could be easily administered in this highly distributed organisation.

Solution

The network security solution developed by AppGate Network Security provided a comprehensive solution combining application VPN, end-point security, network admission control and internal network security.

GSS, an AppGate partner and expert in IT security, worked with Macdonald Hotels to put the network security infrastructure in place. An AppGate Security Server was installed behind the company firewall, and AppGate's Personal Firewall was installed on every corporate laptop.

" I am really delighted with the AppGate solution. We can now easily control access to the network and set corporate policies, so employees can work remotely without compromising the network security ... "

John Rawcliffe
IT Director
Macdonald Hotels





Using AppGate's Policy Manager, the system administrators can define and distribute policies for all personal firewalls on the network providing high levels of internal security and, for hotel staff, providing a secure environment for remote working. Homeworkers can easily access core applications such as Outlook Web Access. Corporate laptop users can access the network from any location. Policies are set automatically depending on whether they are working inside or outside the network, precisely controlling the applications and information they can access so providing protection against the spread of viruses and Trojans.

"The AppGate solution means that my team can now easily control the firewall settings at all points on the network, ensuring that all our staff can work remotely without compromising the security of our network." said John Rawcliffe, IT director for Macdonald Hotels.

The Future

As well as meeting their immediate needs, the functionality built into the AppGate solution will support Macdonald Hotels in the future as the business continues to grow. The company is already looking at extending the scope of the network to include outsourcing partners, providing controlled access to certain servers. In addition, they are also looking at equipping senior managers with mobile devices such as PDA's, which will connect over GPRS using one of the family of AppGate Mobile Clients to access their email.

AppGate Network Security

"The AppGate system has overcome all the limitations and restrictions we had with our original SSL solution. Great job by GSS and AppGate! ..."

In a world with fewer borders, the demand for network security changes from security at the perimeter to security at the source. AppGate is the leader in this space with a solution that protects applications and communication as well as securing end-point devices. The AppGate solution supports all types of networks; fixed, wireless and mobile and is easily integrated into existing customer environments. AppGate has customers in 19 countries, many from market segments like defence, government and Fortune 500 companies.

John Rawcliffe
IT Director
Macdonald Hotels

How We Did This...

End Point security was a key element that was missing from MacDonalD Hotels' original SSL solution. The AppGate Personal Firewall controls all inbound and outbound traffic on all adapters and network interfaces, providing automatic protection against malformed and illegal network packets. By deploying this, their laptops could now be used safely and securely both on the inside and on the outside.

Policy Manager creates a default rule-set, which ensures the corporate policies are in effect wherever the laptop is used. System administrators can then use Policy Manager to define and distribute policies for all personal firewalls used inside the network. Outside the office, the rule-sets in the firewall are controlled by the AppGate Security Server, according to the 'role' being used at the time.

