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Chris Leeke
IT Project Manager



INDUSTRY Retail

Founded in 1897, Leekes is a department store located in South Wales. Since being established, the business has passed through the family and expanded rapidly with a home improvements centre opening in the mid 1960s in Tonypany, and then the larger format department stores opening in Llantrisant in 1977, Cross Hands in 1984 and Melksham in 1992.

With approximately 1,500 members of staff operating from Leekes' head office, four retail outlets, a hotel, leisure club and two golf courses, around 200 of whom have access to internet and email, network security is a priority at Leekes.

IT project manager, Chris Leeke, was looking for an Internet security solution that would tackle the problem of viruses, intrusions and spam before they enter the company network: "We are moving to a thin client system and although this does away with many of the security liabilities associated with desktop computing by preventing viruses and local programme installation, it also makes us more reliant on the integrity of our servers. We identified that it would be better to stop potential threats before they enter our network."

After evaluating a number of solutions, Leekes opted for two RM 300 Net-

work Boxes (dual Network Box solution) in high availability mode. Provided in a rack mount chassis, they are positioned at the edge of the network, and all Internet traffic is routed through them.

The primary RM 300 appliance provides Leekes with a wide range of Internet security protection including, virus protection, a firewall, intrusion detection and prevention, content filtering, spam filtering and VPN support for secure remote access. The secondary RM 300 appliance operates in backup mode and takes over if the primary Network Box fails.

Chris said, "The solution's failover capability was a major deciding factor for Leekes. Because the Network Box supports failover, Leekes can have two physically different connections to the Internet and let the backup take over if the primary link fails.

"Above all, because the Network Boxes are remotely managed and updated, this has reduced the overall workload for the IT staff at Leekes."

The Network Box's DMZ or "De-Militarised Zone" capability was also of interest to Leekes. The DMZ is a physically separate network from the department store's trusted internal network and the external public network. The web server sits here, allowing it to be accessed

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by external web traffic, without compromising the security of the department store's main network.

"The dual Network Box solution allows us to standardise on web usage across the whole Leekes organisation; no matter which site is making a request for a web page. With the DMZ facility, we can apply an 'acceptable use policy' to web usage and it is much easier than having to manage individual devices across 3 or 4 different sites."

The dual Network Box solution's anti-virus functionality has dramatically improved Leekes' computer virus problem, as Chris commented: "Since we have been using the Network Boxes we have not had a single instance where an external virus has got through our network. There is a setting of Kaspersky anti-virus available within the Network Box that prevents a whole host of malware entering our network."

With the HTTP (HyperText Transfer Protocol) scanning feature included on the appliances, the Network Boxes are able to protect Leekes against viruses being downloaded while employees browse web pages.

HTTP scanning enables the Network Box to scan content that comes from surfing the Internet and checks attachments that are downloaded with the webpage for viruses. While most viruses are transmitted by email, this feature provides a valuable extra defence for Leekes.

Spam was also a big issue for Leekes before the Network Box install. "From day one the boxes went in, our spam problems have reduced significantly," said Chris.

Leekes IT department is also taking advantage of the fact the Network Boxes are managed remotely, and updates are pushed to the appliances automatically through the company's unique PUSH technology. This means that the Leekes company network is protected 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, against all main malware threats includ-

ing, hackers, undesirable content, viruses, spam, spyware and phishing.

Chris added, "Because all Network Box devices are continuously maintained and updated by the company, they deliver high levels of security and business protection. No user intervention or configuration is required from us which means it's a huge weight off our shoulders."

As well as anti-spam and anti-virus, Leekes uses the content filtering capability of the Network Box solution as Chris explained: "The primary Network Box appliance filters our outgoing traffic – the built-in SurfControl software blocks access to dubious websites. This is excellent for us as we now feel confident that Internet access is no longer being misused internally."

The RM 300 Network Box solution's firewall and intrusion detection/prevention capabilities complete the department store's protection. "We have had no problems with intrusions since the Network Boxes were installed," said Chris.

The Network Box uses over 320 intrusion detection signatures to provide early warning of concerted attempts to compromise a company's network. Additionally, the IDS communicates with the firewall to block suspicious traffic. It does this by dynamically adding rules to prevent a targeted attack from proceeding. This allows the Network Box to protect Leekes' network against denial of service attacks.

Chris has further plans regarding IT security for Leekes as he states: "We will continue to rollout our server-based computing solutions and support our remaining desktop PCs and servers with anti-virus software."

Chris concluded, "Our workload is heavy but the Network Box support staff have been forthcoming and efficient in executing any requested work. The Network Boxes have made things much easier for us. From our point of view, it has been money well spent."

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