

Stephenson Harwood



STEPHENSON HARWOOD

Stephenson Harwood lays law down to secure firm's endpoints

Overview

Stephenson Harwood is an established international law firm headquartered in London and focused on the financial services, transportation and real estate markets. The firm offers clients the full range of legal services and has seven offices across the globe, employing 70 partners and 750 staff.

The Challenge

As one of the leading international law firms working for a wealth of blue-chip clients, Stephenson Harwood has a duty of care to ensure that customer data held on its network is secure. In today's world, where USB devices capable of storing significant amounts of data proliferate, IT departments in law firms have a significant challenge on their hands to ensure that sensitive data residing on their networks remains there and security is not compromised.

As well as protecting confidential client information and other sensitive data from being downloaded and copied onto USB memory devices, Stephenson Harwood wanted to control what is loaded onto the corporate network by employees to prevent, for example, malware entering the network and potentially compromising the firm's IT systems.

Chris Petrie, Director of IT at Stephenson Harwood, adds: "As a leading law firm, we already use a number of IT security products to secure our network against threats,

but wanted to add a specific endpoint security solution to make our network still more secure. We have 500 employees in our London office alone, and trying to keep track of what is happening on 500 endpoints at any one point is virtually impossible without deploying software designed for this purpose."

Stephenson Harwood also needed to ensure that whatever solution they chose would be transparent to employees and would not get in the way of its lawyers carrying out their jobs.

Petrie adds: "We knew what we wanted to achieve – visibility of what was coming on and off the network and an ability to enforce acceptable use policies (AUPs) – but this needed to happen without getting in the way of the legal teams' day-to-day client work. The starting point for management of endpoint security is to know what you are managing; without this information you cannot know whether you have a problem or not."

The Solution

Stephenson Harwood began its search to find an endpoint security product that would fulfill its requirements and strengthen its existing IT security strategy. Chris Petrie comments: "We started looking at endpoint security software about six months ago, but none of the products we reviewed met our stringent requirements. Then we looked at SecureWave's Sanctuary. We were immediately impressed by Sanctuary and became increasingly so during an initial testing period."

By employing a whitelist approach, SecureWave Sanctuary enables only

authorised devices to connect to a network, laptop or PC and only authorised applications to execute on the network. Sanctuary enables administrators to quickly establish and enforce application and device control policies by rapidly identifying unauthorised applications and devices and then assigning permissions accordingly.

As a Novell eDirectory site, Stephenson Harwood needed to select an endpoint security solution that would integrate with Novell's directory service. Coincidentally, SecureWave had been looking at the potential for Sanctuary within the eDirectory market at around the same time. The two companies agreed to cooperate closely on the deployment at the firm's London offices, to ensure that Sanctuary would integrate effectively with Novell's eDirectory.

Chris Petrie adds: "What was great about the people at SecureWave was how they went out of their way to work closely with us to ensure that the initial three month testing period, as well as the actual deployment, went smoothly. The agreement worked well for both companies: we got a tremendous amount of input from the SecureWave team and SecureWave was able to achieve its objective of deploying Sanctuary at a Novell eDirectory site."

Chris Petrie continues: "Whenever we encountered the inevitable minor problems with Sanctuary during the initial testing period, we knew that we could count on the SecureWave team to help us fix those problems as quickly as possible."

The extended period of testing was only necessary because it was important to ensure that Sanctuary

integrated fully with Novell eDirectory. Once Chris Petrie and his team were confident that Sanctuary worked well with eDirectory under lab conditions, they installed it on the machines in the IT Systems department. When that proved successful, they deployed Sanctuary on all of the machines in one legal department. Sanctuary was rolled out across the rest of the London office in December 2006.

Chris Petrie adds: "I cannot praise the SecureWave team enough for the way that they worked with us on this project and for the quality of their software. The testing phase went smoothly and the software is so easy to install that we were able to deploy Sanctuary across all 500 endpoints in the London office in no time at all."

The Benefits

Since deploying Sanctuary, Stephenson Harwood's IT team feels safe in the knowledge that they are able to block potential threats effectively at the endpoint, be they

application or device-driven threats. The firm is now able to monitor which files go off the network and what applications, if any, employees are trying to upload onto the network.

Chris Petrie explains: "We have been making great use of Sanctuary's monitoring and auditing capabilities to ascertain what is going on and off the network and are now in a position where we can make intelligent decisions on where policies might need to be tightened up slightly. Furthermore, although it's early days, we have already seen a reduction in the number of PC problems being reported to our team, because only authorised, whitelisted applications can now be run on our machines. This reduces substantially the possibility of viruses and other malware being present on the network, keeping employee productivity high and freeing up the IT support team to focus on other issues."

Chris Petrie concludes: "We have a small handful of security products that

we really trust at Stephenson Harwood to do a specific job, and Sanctuary is at the top of this list. It's a good, solid product that works in the background, and does what it says it will do without getting in the way of the lawyers and their administrative teams."

The Future

Stephenson Harwood will continue to monitor how the Sanctuary deployment works in practice and will fine-tune the implementation as appropriate, but the firm feels safe in the knowledge that it is offering a duty of care to its customers that ensures that their data is effectively protected on Stephenson Harwood's network.

Sanctuary may also be rolled out to the firm's overseas offices at some point in the future.



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