

Global Marketing Consultancy Picks FaceTime for Security and Visibility of IM and P2P Applications

CASE STUDY



ABOUT FACETIME RTGUARDIAN™

- Provides visibility on all real-time communications use within the organization
- Prevents unauthorized IM and P2P connections, including Skype
- Guards against incoming spyware at the gateway
- Detects and blocks “phone home” behavior of adware/spyware
- Non-stop protection with automatic updates from FaceTime Security Labs
- Ensures compliance with mandated data privacy regulations
- Rapid set up plus simple ongoing administration and management reporting.
- Integrates with FaceTime’s IMAuditor and Greynet Enterprise Manager for end-to-end security and management of IM, P2P and other greynets
- Certified by Cisco Technology Developer Program and Symantec SESA

“As a cutting-edge consultancy, it’s vital for our employees and consultants to communicate with clients using cutting-edge tools. FaceTime’s Real-Time Guardian lets us do so without compromising the security or performance of our networks”

Hamish Davidson, VP of Information Technology, Zyman Group
FaceTime customer since 2006

Overview

Founded by former Coca-Cola Company Chief Marketing Officer Sergio Zyman in 1999, Zyman Group is focused on providing strategic research and counsel that enables clients to accelerate profitable growth through marketing. Using proprietary techniques and deep expertise, Zyman Group consultants leverage their considerable real-world experience to deliver results that keep those clients returning for more. The company has delivered profitable growth and proven business-building results for clients across numerous industries by rigorously applying marketing as a science, not as an art. Zyman Group is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, with satellite offices in Chicago, Mexico City, London, and Miami to support increasing demand for its services from Latin America and Europe. In May 2005, MDC Partners, a holding company for a number of marketing organizations, acquired a majority interest in Zyman Group.

Challenge

Zyman Group is positioned as taking a rigorous, scientific approach to marketing, which makes it important for the company to be seen by its clients to be making intelligent and value-generating use of technology. Clearly, that includes the use of real-time collaborative applications such as IM and P2P. Unusually, Zyman’s IT team encourages the use of IM, as they find it generates less volume, and thus requires less storage, than traditional email.

The company is standardized on Microsoft and Cisco infrastructure, and instant messaging is supported internally through Microsoft’s Live Communications Server (LCS). Users’ desktops are locked down to the extent that they have no administrative rights, but since Microsoft’s MSN IM client is part of the Windows operating system, IT had no control over its use. While personal firewalls are in place on all end user machines, this was clearly a cause for concern, as the IT team was well aware of the increasing threats posed by malware code using IM and P2P channels to enter networks and the fact that firewalls did not offer the kind of flexibility needed to protect against intentionally evasive malware. Additionally, MDC Partners, the group’s majority shareholder, is a public company and therefore required to abide by the compliance requirements of Sarbanes-Oxley and other legislation governing the use and storage of electronic communications.

Zyman Group's regional offices all connect to the Internet through the company's Atlanta headquarters, and all remote connections from outside the network are required to enter the organization through VPNs in order to access network resources. It was therefore vital that any workable solution have zero impact on network performance and traffic throughput speeds.

Solution

Implementing a solution that enabled Zyman's IT team to regain control over IM usage and other gateway-level protection in the organization turned out to be a two-stage process, although it was not planned that way. In early 2005, VP of Information Technology Hamish Davidson was discussing potential solutions with the company's reseller, SoftChoice, when he came across an article in eWeek magazine describing two potential solutions.

As the company already had experience with solutions from one of their Anti Virus vendors, McAfee, they initially chose that route, installing WebShield and the e500 appliance to take care of security at the gateway. Not only did this solution fall short in terms of managing security at the gateway, the appliance failed multiple times – and given that all Zyman's Internet connectivity is handled through a single access point, the entire WAN went down with it. Clearly, this was not a workable solution – a conclusion underlined by the poor support response Zyman received from McAfee.

"Twenty-twenty hindsight is a wonderful thing", comments Davidson. "We went with the solution from the then-better-known vendor, at least in part because their solution appeared to provide broad coverage for a lot of the problems we were trying to solve. Unfortunately, we were badly let down by both the solution and the vendor."

So Davidson returned to the drawing board and updated himself on the other potential solution in that original article – Real-Time Guardian from FaceTime Communications. He went ahead and installed an evaluation unit next to the main Internet access point in Atlanta and started testing.

Results

Davidson was immediately impressed with the ease and speed of implementation, the simplicity of management, and the clear and immediate return on investment.

"Right away we were able to see exactly what was going on with real-time communications use", says Davidson. "There was clearly significant use of unapproved IM clients, as well as some unauthorized P2P use. That visibility gave us the information we needed to adjust policies and force all IM traffic through LCS."

After his experience with McAfee, Davidson was also relieved to note that "we have not had to touch the FaceTime box since we dropped it in."

"The icing on the cake with FaceTime's solution was the Sarbanes-Oxley compliance", notes Davidson. "MDC Partners, as a public company, is required to comply with SOX electronic communications regulations. Without the assurance of compliance provided by Real-Time Guardian, we would have been forced to stop using instant messaging."

About FaceTime Communications

Founded in 1998, FaceTime Communications is the leading provider of security solutions for the management and control of greynet applications such as adware/spyware, instant messaging, webmail, peer-to-peer file sharing, web conferencing and VoIP. FaceTime is ranked #1 by SC Magazine for IM Security, and has been rated #1 by IDC for two consecutive years. FaceTime solutions are used by almost two million people in over 800 organizations, among them eight of the ten largest U.S. financial institutions. FaceTime supports all leading public and private IM network providers, professional community networks, P2P networks including Skype, and WebEx web conferencing.

