Large Belgian hospital improves email security and simplifies compliance.

AZ Jan Palfijn chooses Barracuda for comprehensive cloud-based solution.

Securing email in the cloud

When Ghent hospital AZ Jan Palfijn was preparing to migrate to Microsoft Office 365, IT and Facilities Director Francky Deleu and IT Manager Ewoud Harnie understood that ensuring email security was critical. Among other email-borne threats, ransomware was clearly on the rise—and healthcare organizations were being heavily targeted by ransomware criminals.

Email is leveraged for more than deploying ransomware, of course. And with an organization of around 1,200 users like AZ Jan Palfijn, there are plenty of opportunities for attackers to target staff inboxes. That's why Deleu and Harnie chose to continue the hospital's long-running partnership with Barracuda Networks by purchasing Total Email Protection.

A great fit

Healthcare organizations (HCOs) have been among the most heavily targeted of any sector during the pandemic. A perfect storm of mass remote working, distracted employees, and under-protected devices, as well as preoccupied IT teams, made them particularly vulnerable to attacks—especially ransomware.

Deleu and Harnie knew they would need more than Microsoft's built-in security to protect their Office 365 users against advanced, evasive phishing attacks.

Budget was a major consideration for the hospital, especially as email is not seen as mission critical for clinicians, in the same way it is for administrative staff. In this regard, AZ Jan Palfijn's existing relationship with Barracuda Networks served it well.

Profile

- 525-bed hospital in Ghent, Belgium

- Staff of ~1200 users includes 150+ physicians

Challenges

- A tight budget and limited IT resources

- Native Microsoft 365 security and email retention not sufficient

- Under continuous attack from phishing, smishing, and vishing

- Compliance with strict regulatory frameworks (GDPR, NIS Directive)

Solution

- Barracuda Total Email Protection (combines Barracuda Essentials, Sentinel, PhishLine, and Cloud-to-Cloud Backup)

Results

- Simplified compliance thanks to advanced cloud backup

- Faster, more efficient incident response following a phishing incident

- Advanced security-awareness training reduces vulnerability to phishing and other threats

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EMAIL PROTECTION

According to Harnie: "Barracuda was open to talking and provided a good quote to make the project possible."

The hospital had been happily running the on-premises Barracuda Email Security Gateway 400 product since 2015, and was therefore confident that Total Email Protection would be of equal quality. Another consideration was whether to source cloud backup separately or not. Here again, using Total Email Protection's built-in Cloud-to-Cloud Backup for streamlined SaaS-based capabilities just made sense.

"We have a small IT team to get everything working and keep it working," says Deleu. "So when we make technology choices, we need to think about what would be good for our functionality, what would be good strategically, and what would be a good fit operationally."

"With Barracuda you simply create a query, search your environment, push the right buttons and all the actions are done for you."

Ewoud Harnie
IT Manager
AZ Jan Palfijn

A huge difference in capability

"What was built in from Microsoft wasn't enough for us," says Deleu. "Microsoft ATP, the configuration options—there was a huge difference between what Barracuda offered us and what Microsoft offered."

Total Email Protection features multiple capabilities for Microsoft 365 organizations including: machine learning-powered Advanced Threat Protection at the gateway; AI blocking of account takeover and social engineering at the inbox; incident response and forensics; security awareness training; and cloud-to-cloud backup.

Deleu and his team worked closely with local security partner Secutec, and implementation and deployment went "incredibly smoothly."

"Barracuda Phishline also provides a good overview of who's phishing-aware in your organization and who isn't."

Francky Deleu
IT and Facilities Director
AZ Jan Palfijn

Supporting healthcare

Deleu and Harnie are impressed by the capabilities already in production. Cloud-to-Cloud Backup provides peace of mind for a highly regulated hospital where Microsoft 365's data retention is simply not sufficient.

"Backup is fine grained. You can recover a file, an email, or even a Teams chat if you want to," says Harnie. "The servers are also based in Europe, which helps with compliance."

Streamlined incident response workflows helped when a phishing attack found its way into 19 inboxes. Administrators quickly found and deleted the email from user inboxes, replaced it with an alert, and had immediate visibility into what actions each user may have taken.

"With Barracuda you simply create a query, search your environment, push the right buttons, and all the actions are done for you," says Harnie. "It also provides a good overview of who's phishing-aware in your organization and who isn't."

Soon Deleu's team will be leveraging these insights to provide targeted, customized security-awareness training with Barracuda PhishLine, including simulated phishing, vishing, and smishing attacks, all of which are on the rise.

"We needed a solution that we can work with but also works for you," says Deleu. "My team and I consider Barracuda a reliable security partner to help us serve our community effectively for the long term."

Learn more about Barracuda Total Email Protection

barracuda.com/products/totalemailprotection

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