



Southampton University Hospitals

AppGate provides the incentive for home-working

Healthcare/NHS | Remote Access | AppGate



Background

Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust (SUHT) provides local hospital services to people living in south Hampshire in the UK, and also provides specialist services such as neurosciences, cardiac services and children's intensive care. In common with all NHS organizations, SUHT encourages flexible working for its 7,500 staff and is keen to enable people to work from home.

Their existing SSL VPN remote access solution didn't have the capability to support the applications and services that staff needed to do their jobs. An alternative system required dedicated equipment to be installed in users' homes – not a cost effective solution for over 7,000 employees. A much more powerful, flexible and cost effective remote access solution was required.

Requirements

Strong security: To protect against unauthorized access, as well as preventing viruses and malware getting onto the network.

Flexible: Capable of meeting the needs of all users, from admin staff to clinicians and consultants, providing access to all services including clinical diagnostic applications such as PACS (Picture Archiving & Communications System). Users should be able to use their own home computer without installing additional equipment.

Scalable, Future Proof: The solution should be easy to scale up to accommodate additional users in the future, and provide the functionality to support new services as requirements change.

Easy to use: To minimize support overheads and encourage remote working, users should

find the system easy to use. Administrators need to control which services and applications each user can access remotely, and change users' roles quickly as staff change jobs.

Solution

The SUHT Network & Security Team compared various solutions on the market and identified that AppGate from Cryptzone, with its rich functionality combined with strong security, as the best for their environment. Ryan Hewitt, SUHT Senior Network & Security SE, commented: "Security was one of the main reasons I chose the AppGate system.

The appliance sits in the DMZ so any unsolicited Internet traffic can be safely blocked before getting onto my network. And it has other security features that other vendors possibly haven't thought about like the AppGate Personal Firewall that can be pushed out to end-users' machines."

To strengthen security, SUHT uses 2-factor authentication. One-time passwords are sent automatically via SMS to the user's mobile phone avoiding the need to deploy and support physical tokens. To make the login process as streamlined and straightforward as possible for users, they also use AppGate's new Chained Authentication feature, which processes and verifies all the required authentication data at the first dialog box so the user doesn't have to enter a password each time they want to use another application.

Remote access via the AppGate system was phased in over a 4-week period to allow users to transition from the old remote access system. "The transition went smoothly which is testament to how user-friendly the system is," said Hewitt. "When users log in they instantly recognize what to do."

"We're doing far more now than we could do with the previous SSL VPN system, but we're also aware that the AppGate appliance is capable of delivering a lot more. We know that as our users' requirements change, we're not going to have to worry about having to source another appliance or application or solution to deliver new services. We've got an incredibly feature rich appliance sitting there that's going to be able to deliver whatever is required."

Ryan Hewitt
Senior Network &
Security SE
SUHT



"Users love the new AppGate system. We're getting about 10 requests a day from people who would like remote access. The admin overhead is negligible. All we need to do is add them into a particular group in Active Directory and then add them onto our Radius server for authentication. It takes about 2 minutes per user."

Ryan Hewitt
Senior Network &
Security SE
SUHT

With the AppGate system now in place, every member of staff has free access to the eRoster application and for a small annual fee they can have remote access to their full desktop enabling them to work wherever they like. User feedback has been very positive with people reporting that the new remote access system is much better than the previous one.

The speed at which users are signing up for the service has taken the team by surprise. After only a few months of running the system they are already looking to add another AppGate Security Server to support the rapidly growing number of users. "The number of users is growing exponentially," said Hewitt. "After only two months we now have twice as many users as we ever had on the previous system. We're getting about 10 requests a day from people who would like remote access. The admin overhead is negligible. All we need to do is add them into a particular group in Active Directory and then add them onto our Radius server for authentication. It takes about 2 minutes per user."

Future

The SUHT team is already working on a new service for clinicians, providing remote access to the PACS system. If someone is on call but away from the hospital and needs to make a clinical decision, the AppGate system can provide them with secure remote access to view full diagnostic grade images, as long as they have access to a high-resolution monitor. "Previously this was a service that we just couldn't deliver," says Hewitt.

"With the old remote access system we didn't have the bandwidth to view these sorts of images but AppGate's IP tunneling and data compression mean this is no longer a problem. Our clinicians are very happy."

Benefits

Strong security

Multiple security features ensuring protection of patient data and network resources

Chained authentication

Combining two or more authentication methods to streamline the log in process and improve the user experience

IP tunneling

AppGate's ability to tunnel any protocol or application means users can have remote access to all the services they need

Data compression

reducing the number of data packets transmitted means advanced applications can run over standard bandwidth connections

Comprehensive solution

AppGate combines all the functionality required for remote access and access control and will support all future user requirements.

Easy to use

Users' positive experience with the AppGate system is encouraging more and more staff to take up flexible working.

Cryptzone solutions mitigate information security risks in key areas of Policy Compliance, Content Security, Secure Access and Endpoint Security.

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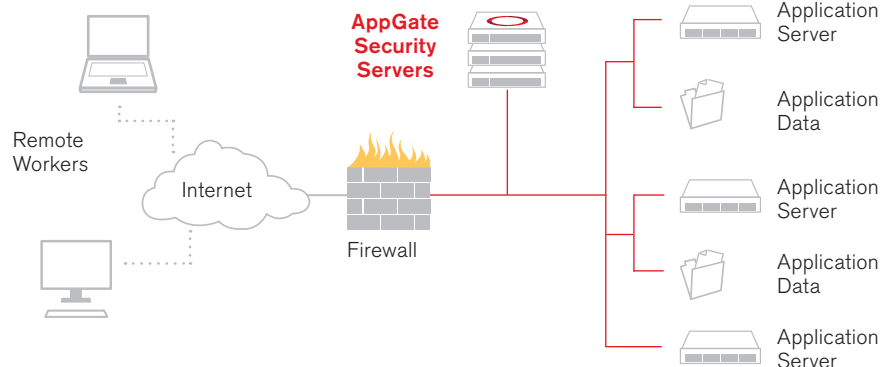
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