



St James Hospital

Secure remote access helps improve patient care

Healthcare/NHS | Remote Access | AppGate



Background

St James Hospital Group in Malta provides a comprehensive range of healthcare services and is the leading local private healthcare organization in the Maltese Islands. Since it was founded in 1984, the group has expanded and now owns and runs a number of hospitals and clinics across Malta and in Libya and Hungary.

As demand for healthcare services increases in the region, a key strategy for St James Hospital has been to extend and improve patient services through the use of technology, accessing additional facilities and resources without necessarily investing in new capital equipment or new clinics.

One such project currently underway is to provide a remote access facility for doctors and consultants so they can read patient records and diagnostic information regardless of where they are working from eg. while working from home or at a different clinic. The project has initially focused on providing this service for radiology and cardiology specialists to meet the high demand for consultants' expertise.

Requirements

St James Hospital required a solution that could provide doctors and consultants with remote access to patient information, department applications and hospital services. The solution therefore needed to meet a number of important requirements:

Information security: it was vital that the solution delivered the highest levels of security so that patient records remain secure and could only be accessed by authorized personnel.

Flexibility: the solution needed to support access from any device and any location so

that consultants could use their own office equipment without the need for installing a leased line or IPSec VPN solution. In addition consultants would need to be able to access a wide range of specialist information such as CRT or MRI scans as well as standard office applications such as email.

High availability: to ensure the highest standards of patient care, consultants would need 24/7 access to the network.

Ease of use: not only should the system be easy to use to minimize the training and support needed for users, it also needed to be easy to use for administrators so they could control and monitor the service centrally.

Solution

After evaluating a number of options, St James identified that the access control technology AppGate, from Cryptzone, provided the ideal solution.

The AppGate solution offered not only the secure remote access functionality required, but also provided additional features and the flexibility to support new patient services in the future with very little additional investment.

John Spiteri, IT consultant for St James Hospital, has been leading the project to find the right solution: "When we were evaluating options we were looking not only at what is needed today but also far ahead. What really clinched the decision to use AppGate was the potential it offered for the future. By virtue of the fact that AppGate will support any mobile device, including phones and PDA's, we know we can extend remote access and develop other services in the future."

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John Spiteri
IT Consultant
St James Hospital



"We've had no issues with the AppGate product. It's very intuitive. And I've had good support from the AppGate team so I'm pleased!"

John Spiteri
IT Consultant
St James Hospital

Implementation

Two AppGate Ax1 security servers have been installed in a cluster at St James behind the firewall, providing redundancy and ensuring high availability of access to applications.

The AppGate solution supports secure connections regardless of the device being used, the transmission type or application, so consultants can work seamlessly from any office. High levels of encryption ensure that all traffic is secured end-to-end. AppGate's intuitive user interface makes the system easy to use with little training needed for users, and central administration makes it easy for the IT team to monitor and control all user access.

User groups already defined in Active Directory are used to assign users' roles. AppGate's advanced Roles and Rights management enables system administrators to define and

control which applications and services should be available, to which users and under what circumstances. So for example policies can be defined that allows consultants in a particular department to only have access to the records of their own patients.

Future

Initial trials have proved very successful, with the AppGate technology integrating seamlessly with the existing network infrastructure as well as specialist applications such as diagnostics imaging. Spiteri is positive about the opportunities for the future. "So far it has met our pressing business needs and we are still exploring the possibilities", says Spiteri. "The flexibility of AppGate enables us to consider other applications for it. For example we're looking at developing secure tele-medicine and tele-diagnostic services."

Key benefits

- Information security – strong encryption, authentication, authorization and rights management work tightly together to protect patient data and network services;
- Flexibility – AppGate supports a wide range of client platforms, from Windows, Mac and Unix/Linux systems to telephones and PDAs;
- Clustering of servers for performance and high availability;
- Integration with existing infrastructure – AppGate has a powerful authorization database to define rules for what applications and services should be available to users, or it can easily link to user accounts and user roles defined in external third party servers such as Active Directory.

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

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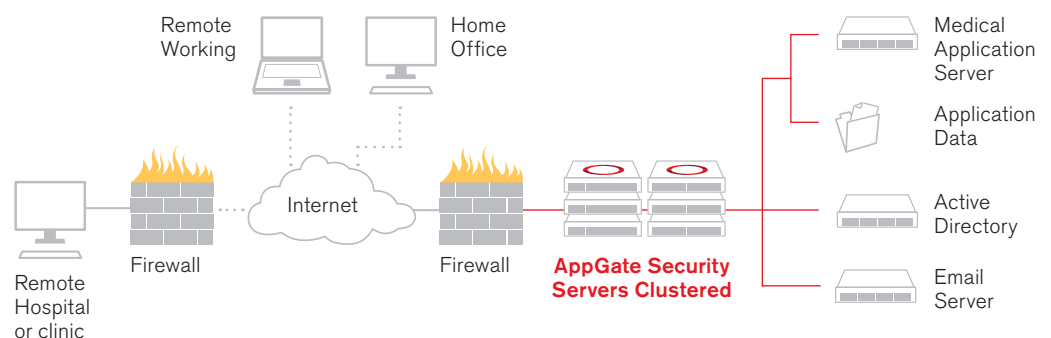
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