

Case Study: Microsoft IAG

security

“Keeping the Law Secure” – Sapphire Helps Thorntons Move to Best Practice

Legal firms across the UK are under growing pressure from clients and prospective customers to demonstrate that they are following a best practice approach to network security. Equally, the firms themselves are increasingly aware that to counter growing threats to their networks they need to implement security systems that deliver business continuity and secure remote access.

Thorntons, one of Scotland's largest law firms with 32 partners, over 350 staff and a diverse range of legal services is no exception to this rule. The firm takes its responsibilities with regard to information security assurance and the integrity of client data extremely seriously.

As a result, Thorntons undertook a review of its existing firewall and remote access solutions to deliver more efficiency, flexibility and functionality, commissioning information security advisor, Sapphire to provide advice on the best solution to implement and ultimately to help replace its existing network firewall and install a new remote access solution.

Turning to Sapphire was a natural first step for Thorntons. The company is well known within the Scottish legal community for the comprehensive array of security services it delivers and the quality of consultancy it provides.

Bedell Group is a Channel Islands based provider of legal and fiduciary services. In addition to its headquarters in St Helier, Jersey, the firm also has offices in Guernsey, London, Dublin and Geneva.

Putting Principles into Practice

In terms of remote access, Thorntons' key concern was to provide employees with a more flexible approach to working.



Study Facts

Customer:
Thorntons Law LLP

Website:
www.thorntons-law.co.uk

Industry:
Legal

Profile: Thorntons Law firm takes its responsibilities with regards to information security seriously. It enlisted the help of information security advisor, Sapphire, to review its existing remote working strategies and to implement a new solution.

Services:
Microsoft IAG
Stonegate Firewall
Swivel PINSafe

**Case Study:**

Keeping the Law Secure

Customer:

Thorntons Law LLP

Sapphire Service:

Microsoft IAG

Stonegate Firewall

Swivel PINSafe

Some staff wanted to work from home, others to put in longer hours when required without having to be tied to the office, while a further group wanted to be able to access the firm's network when on holiday.

As Director of IT, Sarah Blair explains, "with our existing virtual private network (VPN) based approach, it was becoming increasingly difficult and time-consuming to support these growing needs. Staff were complaining that the system was cumbersome to use and that it was difficult to access the full range of information they needed. As a result, we decided that we needed to migrate to a more secure and cost-effective remote access connectivity solution."

"We wanted a system that was easy to administer, straightforward to use, flexible and cost-effective," she adds.



With Sapphire's help, Thorntons began to look for a system that would allow staff to securely retrieve case loads, work on business critical applications and access a broad range of information remotely from any location. Sapphire played a key role in this pre-sales process providing expert consultancy and advice in helping Thorntons choose an appropriate solution.

After careful consideration of competitive offerings, Thorntons chose to implement the Microsoft Intelligent Application Gateway (IAG), a browser-based secure socket layer SSL VPN solution which forms part of the Microsoft Forefront™ line of business security products. Thorntons also chose to implement PINsafe from Swivel to deliver a second layer of authentication around Microsoft's IAG existing authentication procedures.

When upgrading the network firewall, Sapphire recommended that Thorntons implement the StoneGate firewall solution from partner organisation, Stonesoft, a leading network security solutions provider. Thorntons chose to implement StoneGate because it was much more sophisticated than its previous solution. In particular, it enables the company to scan all web and mail traffic, to pinpoint to a fine level of detail the nature of all attempts to access the network and to provide in-depth reporting of traffic types.

Sapphire helped Thorntons to carry out a staged implementation of the new solutions. The Stonegate firewall was implemented first followed by the installation of Microsoft IAG and PINsafe. Sapphire provided consultancy around the need to follow a strict order of implementation. The whole process was made yet more seamless by the use of the same Sapphire consultant on both projects.

Assessing the Benefits

Thorntons has seen many benefits since the completion of the Sapphire-led implementation. It has saved significant time in terms of reduced need to support remote users. It is also able to support a much wider group of remote users and to do so while significantly reducing its administrative overhead.



Case Study:
Keeping the Law Secure

Customer:
Thorntons Law LLP

Sapphire Service:
Microsoft IAG
Stonegate Firewall
Swivel PINSafe

In addition, Thorntons has also been able to monitor and track access to its systems more closely since the installation. It has achieved much better granular control over what people access and can now generate a full range of management reports to further aid the decision-making process.

Further, the system allows Thorntons to enforce specific policies, allowing access to the firm's network to be tightly restricted. Devices which do not have the correct security levels or the right anti-virus software, for example, will only be permitted restricted access. These processes are self-managing and do not require any direct intervention from Thorntons' IT team.

Sarah Blair identifies another key benefit: "Before we implemented the new system, we had to provide staff with their own laptops every time they wanted to work flexibly from home, were going away on holiday or on a business trip. And we had to set-up and configure all of this kit specifically for each staff member every time there was such a need."

"This proved particularly cumbersome when changes needed to be managed. We had to reconfigure each individual device which in practical terms meant home visits for many users," she continues. "Today, all of this is done automatically and centrally. The Thorntons' in-house IT team does not have to do anything in terms of providing or configuring new equipment."



Sapphire also put in place a Special Security Agreement (SSA) with Thorntons which allowed the work to be carried out in as flexible and cost-effective a way as possible.

"We have been happy with the highly professional, proactive and responsive service and support Sapphire has provided," adds Sarah Blair. "In fact we have just renewed our maintenance contract with Sapphire which underlines the level of trust we have in the relationship."

The firm is looking to continue to use Sapphire, for example for regular penetration testing. As Sarah Blair concludes, "we currently don't have specific security projects in the pipeline but Sapphire would certainly be our preferred supplier for any future work we decided to carry out."