

Insurance Underwriter Reduces Network Utilization from 95% to 35% with Trend Micro™ InterScan™ Web Security Virtual Appliance

Bass Underwriters stands out from the competition with its focus on professional services that were the driving force behind the early success of the independent agency. The company's success is 100% reliant on a secure Internet experience for its agents and partners.

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IT Manager
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DAMAGE CONTROL

“I realized early in my career with Bass that our first priority must be to address security and network bandwidth performance,” said Scott Morgan, Director of Information Technology. “Our support team was struggling with a security solution that was no longer adequate for the protection of our business.” The situation got to the point where the Help Desk was continually swamped with security-related calls, and several PCs a month had to be reformatted to deal with the residual effects of infections and attacks. These inconveniences impacted the productivity of both IT and agents. The company's network was also 95% saturated due to downloads of inappropriate web content by employees, and IT was not able to prevent bypassing of the in-place web filtering solution. With his new IT manager, Rudy Dellafiore in place, Morgan and Dellafiore began to evaluate solutions that would grow with their business requirements.

“I was familiar with Trend Micro from my previous position,” said Rudy Dellafiore, IT manager at Bass Underwriters. “I knew Trend Micro security solutions would be good for our company—now that we have switched, we see a big increase in overall protection.”

With the support of the management team, IT switched to Trend Micro™ Enterprise Security solutions included in Trend Micro™ NeatSuite™ Advanced security:

KEY BENEFITS

- **Multilayered protection.** End-to-end security blocks a broad range of threats at multiple points on the network.
- **Increased productivity.** Threats are identified and stopped before they impact users or systems.
- **Strict policy enforcement.** Gateway scanning of traffic, including encrypted streams, enforces web security policies and prohibits employees from circumventing restrictions.
- **Decreased costs.** Virtual appliance deployment eliminates the initial cost and ongoing maintenance fees for dedicated physical servers and operating systems.

- Endpoint protection (Trend Micro™ OfficeScan™ Client-Server Suite)
- Messaging security (Trend Micro™ ScanMail™ Suite for Exchange™, InterScan™ Messaging Security Suite)
- Web security (Trend Micro™ InterScan™ Web Security)
- Security management (Trend Micro™ Control Manager™)

BEFORE AND AFTER TREND MICRO

As part of its project cost justification, IT reported to management the results achieved with the new Trend Micro security solution. Security-related Help Desk calls dropped significantly, as threats were blocked before they could impact systems and employees.

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During a one-month evaluation period, IT recorded a major worm outbreak that was blocked, as well as 82 critical viruses contained and cleaned. More than 200 spyware instances were caught, and approximately 55,000 spam messages were filtered during that same measurement period.

“Email is vital to our organization, and our email traffic continues to increase,” explained Dellafiore. “Trend Micro messaging security gives us a multilayered solution that takes care of spam and email-borne threats that used to waste time for our employees.”

ENFORCING WEB FAIR USE POLICIES

Before the change in security solutions, employees’ web behaviors posed a particular challenge for the company. The business is completely web dependent—agents must access insurance carriers’ online sites to look up information and policy forms. The combination of the company’s private network and the Internet connects Bass Underwriters to its market and industry partners. The company’s management teams are aware that email-based and Internet threats pose potential negative impacts to equipment and performance, and can also result in monetary impact due to system downtime, reduced bandwidth availability, and loss of employee productivity.

“Our business is 100% reliant on the Internet, but with our previous security solutions we could not effectively enforce our company’s web policies,” said Dellafiore. “The switch to Trend Micro allowed us to get our employees’ web surfing habits under control. We can see what sites are being visited and impose controls that employees cannot circumvent.”

When the company switched to Trend Micro, management also reiterated guidelines for safe web behavior. Senior executives, human resources (HR), and IT worked together to educate employees about the potential effects of web and email threats. “It’s important to emphasize how the use of Trend Micro’s web monitoring technology has provided us the ability to become proactive in protecting our companies assets, which includes clients’ confidential information, while protecting our employees from accessing sites that could become a threat to our environment,” said Scott Morgan, Director of IT at Bass Underwriters.

LOWERING COSTS WITH A VIRTUAL APPLIANCE

Bass Underwriters originally deployed the Trend Micro™ InterScan™ Web Security Suite product for web threat protection at its Internet gateway. When the company introduced VMware-based virtualized servers and storage area network (SAN), it was logical for IT to test out the virtual appliance version of the Trend Micro web security solution. The virtual appliance gives them the latest Trend Micro enhancements, which have allowed them to more effectively control employees’ web behaviors. Dellafiore said, “The Trend Micro™ InterScan™ Web Security Virtual Appliance product has greatly reduced our network utilization, from 95% down to 35% of capacity, because of the effective blocking of access to inappropriate music and video downloading sites.”

The virtual appliance deployment option also allows Bass Underwriters to avoid the initial cost and added administration responsibilities of a traditional server-based solution. “We chose the InterScan Web Security Virtual Appliance deployment option for our Internet gateway to avoid the Windows license fee and annual maintenance fees on another physical server,” said Dellafiore. “Installation of the virtual appliance was very easy and we’ve been very happy to get a better return on our existing server investments. InterScan Web Security Virtual Appliance integrated seamlessly into our network without an Internet proxy, and now we can redirect all of our Internet traffic through the appliance for scanning. Everyone on our network is better protected today with the virtual appliance in place.”

Bass Underwriters is also evaluating a virtual appliance to replace the existing Trend Micro messaging security gateway solution. “We currently use Trend Micro InterScan Messaging Security Suite,” said Dellafiore. “We would love to move over to the Trend Micro™ InterScan™ Messaging Security Virtual Appliance product, and this is something we can do later this year when our current license comes up for renewal.”

ADVANCED WEB SECURITY FEATURES

Bass Underwriters takes advantage of the advanced web threat protection features built into the InterScan Web Security Virtual Appliance. Web reputation introduces in-the-cloud protection from web threats, blocking risky sites without requiring continual manual updates to blacklists. Web reputation is part of the Trend Micro™ Smart Protection Network™ solution, a next-generation cloud-client infrastructure that combines sophisticated cloud-based reputation technology, feedback loops, and the expertise of Trend LabsSM researchers to deliver real-time protection from emerging threats.

The latest release of InterScan Web Security also enables scanning of encrypted HTTP traffic. “Some of our employees used to take advantage of the fact that encrypted traffic was not scanned,” said Dellafiore. “Now, our InterScan Web Security solution can decrypt traffic, scan it, and then re-encrypt it. Legitimate web access is transparent for users, but with the added protection of scanning in all cases. This feature avoids vulnerabilities that could otherwise enter our network in encrypted traffic and blocks users that try to access prohibited sites by using secure HTTP connections.”

LDAP integration and authentication lets IT define customized web policies for different groups of users within the company. “With InterScan Web Security Virtual Appliance, we can monitor and filter web traffic for employees, but allow executives more freedom,” said Dellafiore. “We can see who is doing what on the web.”

The new web security solution continues to provide increased protection for the company’s network and employees are happy with the performance and sense of security they now experience when accessing legitimate websites. “At the end of the month—our busy time for getting policies through—the InterScan Web Security Virtual Appliance easily keeps up. Today, for example, I can see that it has blocked 250,000 sites. Without this automatic

CORPORATE PROFILE

Bass Underwriters Plantation, Florida

With a firm commitment to the excess and surplus lines marketplace, Bass Underwriters provide insurance programs necessary for independent agencies or groups of independent agencies to obtain quality service from their brokers. The foundation of the organization is built on strong relationships with its agency force and company partners. Driven by relationships, not statistics, Bass Underwriters provides critical facilities necessary for agents to deliver quality insurance products to its clients.

- **Industry/Vertical** Insurance
- **Employees** 250
- **Infrastructure** 250 PCs; 17 locations
- www.bassuw.com

protection, we'd still be busy cleaning up systems from web-borne threats."

Web protection is so important for the business that Bass Underwriters is beta testing the new Trend Micro Advanced Reporting and Management module for InterScan Web Security solutions. "Monitoring and reporting Internet activity is a top priority for us and we can't wait to take advantage of the new Advanced Reporting and Management solution for real-time visibility into our network use," said Dellafiore. "Trend Micro continues to give us enhancements such as HTTPS scanning and new solutions that allow us to evolve web security policies so that we can meet the needs of our employees and our customers."

TREND MICRO PRODUCTS

- **NeatSuite Advanced**
<http://us.trendmicro.com/us/products/enterprise/neatsuite/index.html>
- **OfficeScan Client-Server Suite**
<http://us.trendmicro.com/us/products/enterprise/officescan-client-server-edition/index.html>
- **ScanMail Suite for Microsoft Exchange**
<http://us.trendmicro.com/us/products/enterprise/scanmail-for-microsoft-exchange/index.html>
- **InterScan Messaging Security Suite**
<http://us.trendmicro.com/us/solutions/enterprise/security-solutions/messaging-security/index.html>
- **InterScan Web Security Virtual Appliance**
<http://us.trendmicro.com/us/products/enterprise/intercan-web-security-virtual-appliance/index.html>
- **Trend Micro Control Manager**
<http://us.trendmicro.com/us/products/enterprise/control-manager/>
- **Trend Micro Smart Protection Network**
<http://www.smartprotectionnetwork.com>



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