

A Nonprofit Boosts Network Security and Visibility



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: The Arc of Three Rivers

Size: 200 employees

Industry: Nonprofit

Location: Charleston, West Virginia

“The Cisco next-generation firewall has given us a solution that works really well with our infrastructure and that gives us the visibility we need within our network.”

Tom Mullins
Network/Systems Administrator,
The Arc of Three Rivers

The Arc of Three Rivers is a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to clients with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Supporting a staff of 200 is a solitary IT pro—Tom Mullins. The job of managing The Arc’s network is a complicated one. The organization has multiple sites, and much of its staff is highly mobile, working with clients in the field.

As a classic IT **lone ranger**, Mullins’ time is incredibly valuable. He also faces formidable and unpredictable budget restrictions, as the organization relies on Medicaid for ongoing funding. IT pros like Mullins have to evaluate every product decision for feature set, cost-efficiency, ease of use, and time to value. With a recent upgrade from the Cisco® ASA 5510 Adaptive Security Appliance to the Cisco ASA 5508-X with FirePOWER™ Services, Mullins was able to meet all of those objectives and more.

One Solution, Many Functions

The ASA 5508-X is ideal for a midsize organization like The Arc because it combines multiple functions in one solution. With the ASA 5508-X next-generation firewall, Mullins can now provide The Arc and its clients with better security using advanced threat protection, industry-leading breach detection, improved VPN access, better visibility into the network, and faster remediation capabilities. In addition, built-in reputation- and category-based URL filtering gives Mullins control over suspicious web traffic. It also can enforce policies on millions of URLs across more than 80 categories. For The Arc, the implementation has resulted in a more secure network, more productive employees, and easier administration for Mullin’s department of one.

Perhaps the biggest impact the ASA 5508-X has had on The Arc is in boosting network security and visibility. The staff of The Arc uses multiple end-user devices to do their work, especially in the field, including desktops, laptops, tablets, and smartphones. With the Advanced Malware Protection and management capabilities of the ASA 5508-X, The Arc has the ability to stop malware at the endpoint without having to quarantine the entire network and further disrupt business operations.

With Cisco security solutions, The Arc of Three Rivers can:



Quickly detect and remediate more threats with improved network visibility.



Optimize security return on investment (ROI) by saving time and money.

“We don’t have to spend hours or days tracking down malware,” Mullins explains. “We can clearly see the endpoints that are affected by that piece of malware and can take care of it quickly. It gives us the visibility to see the threat as it enters our network and help ensure that it doesn’t spread. I sleep better at night because I know The Arc is protected even when I’m not here.”

Cleaning Up the Network

Those new levels of visibility have also provided new insights into internal network activity, immediately revealing heavy traffic from BitTorrent, Tor, Facebook, YouTube, and other sites that can impact network performance as well as the productivity of employees.

“Within one week of deploying the solution, we had visibility into BitTorrent traffic and Tor traffic on our network,” he says. “And with the Cisco next-generation firewall, we were able to put rules in place to stop that traffic.”

Thanks to the URL filtering and reporting provided on the ASA 5508-X with FirePOWER Services, Mullins was also able to determine that 20 percent of the organization’s network resources were being used for social media purposes.

“Now that we have deployed the Cisco next-generation firewall, we have granular visibility within our network. We’re seeing the type of traffic that really impacts the productivity of our workers and that helps us make informed business decisions on company usage policies.”

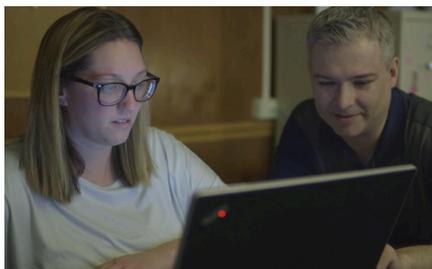
Putting Time Back on the Clock

Mullins says the Cisco next-generation firewall’s security and visibility features have also helped save him valuable time.

“I’m not spending as much time going down rabbit trails looking for viruses, looking for malware, trying to analyze what people are viewing, and those types of things. Having all those features in one solution has reduced my workload and truly made my life easier.”

The ASA 5508-X with FirePOWER Services has eased Mullins’ workload in other ways as well, especially by providing mobile VPN capabilities that facilitate remote network troubleshooting—a feature that comes in handy after business hours and other times that Mullins is not on the premises.

It’s also cutting down on Mullins’s travel time. The Arc has two remote locations, and the Cisco solution gives him the ability to support end-users at those locations without physically having to be on site.



Improve productivity and better protect employees from online threats.

Products and Services

- Cisco ASA 5508-X with FirePOWER Services
- Cisco FirePOWER Services in use:
 - Advanced Malware Protection
 - Next-Generation Intrusion Prevention System
 - URL filtering

“I used to spend several hours a week traveling from site to site,” he recalls. “Now I’m able to connect wherever I am and work more effectively. If a user is locked out, for example –now I can simply connect via my tablet and make the needed changes quickly and easily.”

Mullins is eager to share his experiences with the ASA 5508-X with his fellow IT pros.

“You can’t go wrong with a Cisco next -generation firewall,” he says. “This technology truly allows me more time to do what’s important, and that’s interacting with my end users and making sure that their experience is the best.”

For More Information

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