

Nortec Secures Pennsylvania County Government with Affordable NextGen Firewall



THE CHALLENGE

When a Pennsylvania county government agency was looking to replace their existing firewall solution, they enlisted the consulting services of Nortec Communications. The customer wanted a more advanced firewall solution that offered more comprehensive security features, enhanced reporting and consistent performance. Specifically, the agency sought a firewall that would accurately and unfailingly address their content filtering needs, inspect traffic at a deeper level and provide logging and reporting that could help identify and thwart potential network attacks.

Moreover, the agency needed to evaluate and consolidate the firewall rules and configurations currently in place. Over time, and with multiple firewall administrators, there were redundant and unnecessary rules still active. The customer was ready to move to a next-generation firewall that could go far beyond blocking ports; they wanted a unified solution as opposed to multiple, separate firewalls working to achieve this initiative together.

THE SOLUTION

Nortec worked with the large county government to first clearly define their requirements and then provided an impartial review of the cost, functionality and performance of multiple solutions. The result was a high-availability SonicWall firewall.

This next-gen firewall solution not only incorporated application control, content filtering, intrusion prevention, anti-spyware and gateway antivirus; it was also configured to inspect encrypted traffic. Equally important, the new firewall solution was configured to support VPN connections from remote users and offices.

To thoroughly test the viability of SonicWall's content filtering, Nortec deployed a proof-of-concept by implementing the security appliance in a passive monitoring mode to see how it would work without disrupting operations. Following the

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successful trial, Nortec implemented a SonicWall high-availability solution, a setup that gave the county a reliable and continuous connection to the internet. They then met with the customer to meticulously assess the rules on the current firewall before configuring the new SonicWall solution.

THE CLIENT'S EXPERIENCE

The county's goal was to find an affordable next-generation firewall that would provide enhanced security, web filtering and VPN access all rolled into one seamless solution. After consulting with Nortec experts they were excited to go with SonicWall and have Nortec assist with the migration from their existing disparate platforms. Here's what they shared:

Nortec's team was very helpful in providing all the details they needed to make our decision including feature sets, costs and implementation. They spent countless hours with us, meticulously going through each rule and policy, which included contacting multiple vendors to ensure each application was configured correctly, removing all security gaps. From day one, Nortec took the "best practice" approach, as opposed to just simply making something work. During the process Nortec transferred much-needed knowledge of the product and the reasons for the configurations. After making the cutover, the project lead from Nortec stayed onsite to ensure any issues that existed were resolved. Overall, what seemed like a daunting challenge turned out to be a painless and insightful experience. We highly recommend SonicWall for a security solution and Nortec Communications as an IT consultant.

- Chief Information Officer, Pennsylvania Municipal County.

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