

Success Story

Network Bandwidth Provider finds a Two-Fold Solution in Astaro

Georgia Public Web, Inc. overcomes firewall and email obstacles with Astaro Security Gateway

Georgia Public Web, Inc., an internet service provider selling fiber connectivity throughout the state, decided that their Cisco PIX firewall was just not cutting it. On top of headaches from keeping the PIX up to date and running in harmony with other security products and operating systems, Systems and Security Architect Neil Fusillo and his team were also dealing with overwhelming spam and email-based malware hitting their network. It was time for some new security solutions.

Problems with Compatibility and Ease of Use

Fusillo explained that although Georgia Public Web has a lot of Cisco machinery and the PIX worked well for routing, its success stopped there. According to Fusillo, the PIX was "tremendously unfriendly with Windows VPN clients", which the company was running. It was also difficult to maintain. He continues, "When you are going to be making changes on a regular basis for security rules and that sort of thing, it becomes a needless headache."

While searching for a new security solution, Fusillo only considered three companies: Cisco, Checkpoint and Astaro. "I've used a number of various products over the years I've been an admin--WatchGuard firewalls and things like that--but nothing I'd really trust in an enterprise situation other than those three," he says. His top priorities in a new solution for Georgia Public Web were ease of use, ability to mesh well with Windows VPN, and the general ability to easily upgrade the system. While he did conclude that the Checkpoint solution had a nice interface, Fusillo found the product expensive and determined from previous use that it was not always the easiest product to

work with.

Fusillo decided to test out the Astaro Security Gateway. Once he and his team put the product through a few months' worth of testing on various systems--they wished to purchase only software licenses and install on their own hardware--it was simple to obtain the licenses, and it took only about 20 minutes to configure the Astaro Security Gateway.

The user friendliness of Astaro Security Gateway was a welcome change for Georgia Public Web. Fusillo found that the product had robust and simple PPTP capability and says, "Administration of the Astaro is easy enough that anyone with a simple understanding of firewall concepts can go in, make simple changes, and see the results quickly." He was also impressed with the ease of updating Astaro Security Gateway. Fusillo concluded, "Overall, it uses the best technology has to offer to provide a good balance of capability and administrative ease."



About Astaro

Astaro is a leader in delivering Internet security appliances. The Astaro Security Gateway simplifies Email, Web & Network Security and has won numerous industry awards as it protects over 32,000 networks in 60 countries. Astaro products are distributed by a worldwide partner network with more than 2,500 solution partners offering local support and services. Astaro Corporation is headquartered in Karlsruhe, Germany, and Burlington, Massachusetts, USA.



Americas

Astaro Corporation
3 New England Executive Park
Burlington, MA 01803
USA
T: +1 781 345 5000
F: +1 781 345 5100
americas@astaro.com

Europe, Middle East, Africa

Astaro AG
Amalienbadstr. 36
76227 Karlsruhe
Germany
T: +49 721 255 16 0
F: +49 721 255 16 200
emea@astaro.com

Visit www.astaro.com

Email Under Siege

As an ISP, Georgia Public Web provides email services for a number of different subscribers, including some large municipalities, as well as companies buying connectivity from the company. This means that Georgia Public Web often sees thousands of emails coming in per minute. According to Fusillo, approximately 85 percent of this mail is spam. The old mail filtering system, a cobbled together set up of MailScanner, ClamAV, SpamAssassin and some homemade solutions, just couldn't keep up. "When I had originally spec'd out hardware for the email, I was going on the idea that this was not going to be a big service we were going to

email because the machine just wasn't able to process all of the mail coming through. It was nightmarish. I was spending all of my time babysitting the email box and wasn't able to get anything else done."

Fusillo and his team tried adding more hardware to cope with the problem, but it was not a manageable solution. They were spending way too much time cleaning out emails and checking junk boxes--not a productive use of man power.

In search of a permanent solution, Fusillo evaluated several dozen possibilities, from

their own server solutions to outsourcing to larger email houses. After testing, he was sold on Astaro, and the Astaro Security Gateway proved to be a good choice. "It was a dramatic difference... We went from a constant struggle to keep afloat in the sea of spam to



Georgia Public Web, Inc. Facilities in Atlanta, Georgia.

be pushing. Our main focus has always been the fiber connectivity, but over time, it's grown, and the amount of spam and the amount of viruses we got through there had just grown exponentially," he explains. "Even after dropping many of the checking rules to check for various kinds of spam, we were still often running six to eight hours behind on

a situation where there are days when we don't see a single spam email at all. It was so sudden and so different from the norm that our first week was simply fielding calls from people who thought email was broken because they weren't seeing their usual deluge of spam coming through."

A Two-Fold Solution

Astaro Security Gateway not only helped Georgia Public Web to upgrade an outdated, cumbersome firewall appliance, but it also provided the company with a permanent solution to its overwhelming email filtering problems. The two Astaro Security Gateways at Georgia Public Web now protect a total of approximately 10,000 users. Fusillo concludes that Astaro's top advantages are its stability,

ease of use and range of functionality, and he says, "Astaro was easily worth ten times its price just for the peace of mind and the ability to now focus on other important projects that had remained on the back burner...Were we to do it all over, I'd choose Astaro again in a heartbeat and skip the dozens of other trials. It's truly been our savior."

Georgia Public Web, Inc.



Georgia Public Web is a member owned non-profit corporation formed in 1998 to help "Bridge Georgia's Digital Divide" by delivering high-end technology services to metro Atlanta and communities throughout the state. Selling fiber connectivity and network bandwidth, GPW has over 2,500 miles of fiber throughout the state and has the largest contiguous network in Georgia. Also extending into Florida, Tennessee and Alabama, Georgia Public Web strives to provide the finest in network connectivity while also providing comprehensive, personal customer service.

Georgia Public Web
1470 Riveredge Parkway
PO Box 420888
Atlanta, GA 30342

T: +1 770 661 2000
F: +1 770 563 0013

www.gapublicweb.net