Province of L'Aquila Secures Email and Saves Money With Proofpoint

The Challenge

- Secure email for internal and external users
- Stay ahead of increasingly sophisticated email threats
- Provide cloud-compatible email security against known and unknown threats

The Solution

- Proofpoint Essentials - Business Package

The Results

- Reduced email-related support calls by 80%
- Provided a cloud-ready solution that works smoothly with latest email platform
- Offloaded security tasks to free staff to focus on more strategic initiatives

The Organisation

Province of L'Aquila

L'Aquila is the largest and most mountainous province of the Abruzzo region of southern Italy. And because of its beautiful scenery, it's also become a tourist destination. It offers visitors winter skiing, summer holiday resorts, natural parks, and more. The area's economy has also grown rapidly. It operates in a wide range of sectors—agricultural, industrial, and manufacturing. This includes a focus on pharmaceuticals, electronics and aerospace. And there are also the more common sectors, such as construction. But along with its range of industries and fast-paced growth, the province also faces mounting security challenges.

The Challenge

Serving citizens throughout a diverse, thriving region

The government of the Province of L'Aquila serves more than 300,000 citizens through a staff of 300 employees. A focused team of only four manages the security, network and applications within its IT infrastructure. This team has a clear mission. And that's to provide the best possible support for internal users and uninterrupted access to city services for citizens.

Email plays an important role in keeping helping employees keep in touch with colleagues and their constituents. When the Province's on-premises Microsoft Exchange platform reached its end of life, the organisation decided to migrate its email system to a cloud platform. But this new email solution could not guarantee the high levels of protection required.

"We were concerned about our inability to block spam and emails with malicious attachments, and the associated high risk of our exposure to ransomware," said Agostino Occhiuzzi, IT manager for the Province of L'Aquila.

The province needed a cloud-ready solution that could protect its organisation against both known and unknown threats to its email system. The solution would need to be fast and simple to deploy. And it would need to be easy for its small IT staff to manage.

The Solution

Proofpoint protects provincial government against email threats
Working closely with its partner Akito, the Province IT team examined a variety of options and chose Proofpoint Essentials - Business Package. "We chose the Proofpoint solution because it was better aligned to our email system compared to products from other providers," said Occhiuzzi. "In our final decision phase, it was the high effectiveness in blocking malicious emails that convinced us to adopt the Proofpoint solution."

The speed and simplicity of implementation within the Province's new mail environment were the strengths of Proofpoint. "The deployment was not time consuming and did not interfere in any way with user operations," said Occhiuzzi.

"Proofpoint has helped free up our security managers to focus on more strategic projects, compared to their previous duties. This has improved our security posture and enabled us to reduce the risks and costs associated with cyber crime."

Agostino Occhiuzzi IT manager, Province of L'Aquila

Proofpoint Essentials - Business Package uses multilayered detection techniques to defend the Province against constantly evolving threats. It helps Occhiuzzi and his team stop known threats like viruses, ransomware and trojan horses. Proofpoint also continually applies dynamic reputation analysis to assess IP addresses. This determines whether it's safe to accept email connections.

The Results

Reducing risks and freeing staff for strategic priorities
With Proofpoint Essentials - Business Package, the Province of L'Aquila can dramatically increase staff productivity and reduce costs. And that's because Essentials can reduce the risk of exposure to malware transmitted via email. Occhiuzzi notes that they've seen a dramatic reduction in user support calls. "We've had a solid 80% reduction in calls related to email problems," he said.

The provincial government is also more confident in the strength of its security posture, thanks to the reduction of ransomware and phishing attacks. The IT team also uses the solution to strengthen its knowledge of the threat landscape to plan proactively.

"We use this threat intelligence information to improve our security posture. It's a big help in the areas that are highlighted as vulnerable by reports," said Occhiuzzi.

With Proofpoint in place, the Province of L'Aquila IT team can spend more time creating innovative ways to serve citizens, and less time worrying about email threats. "Proofpoint has helped free up our security managers to focus on more strategic projects, compared to their previous duties," said Occhiuzzi. "This has improved our security posture and enabled us to reduce the risks and costs associated with cyber crime."

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