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TasRail Gets Its Email Security on Track With Mimecast

Challenge

For a network operator like TasRail, successfully maintaining service requires business operations to be available 24x7. So when a ransomware attack slipped past the organisation's legacy security solution, its 4-person IT team realised it was time for a different approach to messaging security.

Although the ransomware was stopped before it caused any damage, the event highlighted the limitations of onpremises security.

With ransomware rife and business email compromise (BEC) emails appearing more frequently, TasRail recognised that cloud-based systems like Microsoft Office 365 promised a highly available messaging environment for its 250 highly mobile field staff, office-based workers and shift workers.

At a Glance

- Legacy security system was poorly suited for cloud-based productivity tools

- Mimecast slashed volumes of malicious email and business email compromise attacks

- Email support queries are down 80 percent, saving thousands of dollars per month

- Continuously available archive ensures high messaging availability for staff in the office and in the field

- Secure cloud-based operation supports corporate governance requirements

Company

- TasRail is a state-owned company that operates Tasmania's 150-year-old freight rail network. Its 250 staff operate and maintain a fleet of 25 locomotives and 325 rolling stock traversing a network that includes 843km of track, 355 bridges, and more than 500 crossings that are currently benefiting from a $119.6m state and federal infrastructure investment.

Products

- Email Security

- M2A

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> # "From the day we turned Mimecast on, all the noise went away. It went almost too smoothly: we were thinking 'it's too quiet – what's going on?' But for the first time in a long time, we've had users saying 'I love what you've done with the email'. It all just works."
>
> *- Andrew Quill, ICT Manager, Tasmanian Rail*

Solution

Based on word-of-mouth recommendation, TasRail ICT Manager Andrew Quill began investigating Mimecast's suite of cloud-based message protection tools and quickly realised it was the perfect fit for the company's needs. The firm implemented Mimecast Email Security and began seeing benefits from day one.

"Anything that might slow down our communications is an issue," Quill explained. "We wanted a solution that would maintain a high percentage of active threat detection, but at the same time reduce the number of false positives. From the day we turned Mimecast on, all the noise went away."

Users were initially surprised at how quiet their email environment had become but rapidly became used to using desktop and mobile interfaces to interact with the Mimecast environment. The system's extensive reporting has improved visibility of the actual threats targeting the company, while the recent addition of journaling and the Mimecast M2A bundle have combined robust cloud-based security with message archiving and high availability.

Summary

TasRail's Mimecast shift has allowed it to modernise and secure its communications infrastructure as well as paving the way for an increasingly cloud-based future. In the short term, Quill added, the Mimecast transition has smoothed daily operations – with the confidence that users won't be compromised by BEC messages, ransomware, and malicious URLs.

Not only has the user experience been significantly improved, but the Mimecast platform has engendered "a significant drop in email-related support calls", he said, estimating that the volume of support calls is down 80 percent over pre-Mimecast levels. Translating this into avoided costs suggests that the new environment is saving TasRail thousands of dollars per month.

Success with Mimecast email filtering paved the way for a greater investment in Mimecast M2A archiving and business continuity capabilities. This saved the firm from having to implement a separate standalone backup tool, which would have complicated its Office 365 environment and introduced a significant cost and administrative burden.

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Looking Ahead

The Mimecast solution has provided confidence by implementing a layer of messaging security and archiving. This has paved the way for a broader upgrade of TasRail's standard operating environment to a modern, cloud-integrated system with features like integrated sign-in. TasRail's IT staff are also encouraging company executives and board members to adopt secure document-sharing and collaboration tools that offer a clear audit trail of all communications and decision-making processes.