Education leader secures and protects cloud assets

Syntra gains simple, powerful backup and complete email security for Office 365

Discovering the need for third-party security in Office 365
Syntra is a leading private educational organization in Belgium. With six locations and a network of around 3,000 teachers, they help an average of 10,000 students with their educational needs.

IT Manager Niels Smets and IT Network Infrastructure Designer Eddy Debauve together manage Syntra's complex IT environment, which is largely based on on-premises hardware and servers, although they are adopting some cloud services and platforms.

"Eddy and I have long focused on finding user-friendly productivity solutions," says Smets. "That's why we adopted Office 365 back in 2016. Back then it was just for email, but now we use it for just about everything. We're storing a lot of data in OneDrive and SharePoint."

They soon came to recognize the need for third-party security and data protection on Office 365. "We had a number of incidents that could easily have led to really bad outcomes," says Smets. "There was a successful account-takeover attack on one of our board members. We spotted and stopped several attacks that began with phishing emails. And our attempts to make people aware of phishing risks really weren't working to change behaviors."

When several files were permanently deleted by accident— and when Smets and Debauve saw just how much sensitive data was stored in Office 365—they realized that both advanced email security and data protection designed for the cloud were urgent priorities.

Profile

- Provides professional and career training
- Multiple sites across Flemish Belgium
- Approx. 3,000 teachers (including contractors and guest teachers),
- Approx. 10,000 students

Challenges

- Needed robust email security solution following adoption of Office 365
- Sought third-party backup solution for Office 365 as Microsoft recommends
- Wanted to improve effectiveness of user security awareness training

Solution

- Barracuda Total Email Protection (combines Barracuda Essentials, Cloud Backup, Sentinel, PhishLine, and Forensics and Incident Response)

Results

- Effective protection against modern cyber attacks
- Comprehensive visibility of email threat surface and activity
- Regained control of its domain and reputation
- Easy, granular cloud backup of Office 365 email and data
- Improved user security awareness
- Faster, more precise incident-response processes

"Microsoft's shared-responsibility security model means they don't guarantee recovery of your data if lost, and they only retain files for quite short periods of time," says Smets. "In fact, Microsoft advises you to use a third-party backup solution for your Office 365 data."

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A comprehensive solution for security and data protection

As they pursued parallel procurement processes for backup and email security, Smets and Debauve learned that Barracuda Total Email Protection combined all the capabilities they were looking for in both solution areas.

"Total Email Protection is just the complete package, it's everything we were looking for," says Debauve. "The Sentinel AI allows us to see and stop sophisticated phishing threats, and PhishLine's simulations and training are already working to transform our users into an extra layer of security. Meanwhile, we also get this powerful, easy-to-use cloud backup capability. Whether I'm looking to restore a single deleted email or an entire corrupted data store, it's done in a few clicks. We haven't seen anything else that performed at a comparable level."

Implementation and beyond

Once Syntra had chosen Barracuda Total Email Protection, things moved quickly and easily. "Implementation was super quick," says Smets. "We even had the help of a dedicated engineer. The few times that issues came up, Barracuda solved them right away and with a really clear dedication to giving the customer a painless experience."

"Barracuda is more than a vendor, for us they're a true security and data-protection partner," says Smets. "Even in our education program, we bring in guest lecturers from Barracuda to help our students understand email and network security and data protection. It's a true partnership."

Debauve sums up his impressions of Barracuda Total Email Protection: "In one sentence this is just a really user-friendly, easy, and complete solution for email security, backup, and security awareness training."

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