Array
N E T W O R K S

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF
CATHOLIC BISHOPS

A G S E R I E S C A S E S T U D Y

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

AG Series SSL VPN with DesktopDirect keeps clients' confidential data secure while allowing staff to work whenever, wherever needed to accomplish their important humanitarian and other missions.

Background

Founded in 1916, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops supports the ministry of all Latin and Eastern Catholic dioceses in the United States and U.S. Virgin Islands. Comprised of all active and retired bishops and cardinals within the region, the Conference also focuses on several priority initiatives during each planning cycle, and supports a wide variety of programs and services related to those initiatives.

These programs and services are supported by 15 to 17 departments – ranging from education to justice issues to migration and more – which work with government and other organizations throughout the region on various projects and initiatives. The migration department, for example, is the largest single entity working with the U.S. government to assist refugees, immigrants and trafficking victims.

Industry:

Religious Organization

Challenges:

Support anytime, anywhere access to documents, files and email from multiple devices, including newer-version mobile devices

Assure security of clients' and the organization's confidential information on any device, in any location

Provide a seamless, easy-to-use experience for end-users

Solution:

Array Networks AG Series secure access gateway with DesktopDirect secure remote desktop access

Benefits:

Conference staff can securely and easily access client data, documents, files and email from any device, anywhere, just as if they were in the office

Client and other confidential information is protected from interception or inappropriate access

Sensitive information is never stored on a remote device, futher assuring security

A custom-branded portal provides a single point of access to applications and resources

Challenges

Due to the nature of their work, there are many situations that require Conference staff to maintain the security of confidential personal information of those which it works to support. In addition, staff frequently travels in support of their respective missions, and often works outside of a formal office setting to assist where needed.

For many years, the Conference had relied upon an Array Networks SPX800 secure access gateway (SSL VPN) to provide secure remote and mobile access for staff working offsite. However by early 2015, the SPX Series had reached end of life, and was unable to support newer operating systems like Windows 10 for PCs and laptops, and iOS and Android for tablets and other mobile devices.

John Galotta, executive director of the Conference's office of information technology said, "The SPX product worked fine, but it was obsolete." While attending an industry trade show, he had an opportunity to see a demo of Array's next-generation AG Series SSL VPNs, and liked what he saw.

Solution and Results

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops purchased an Array AG1000 gateway, along with the DesktopDirect™ application module to provide remote desktop access. "DesktopDirect was a driving force in our decision to upgrade," said Galotta. "Our work has evolved to require access to desktops from remote locations during travel or from home. We needed to be able to cover all use cases," he continued.

Array's unique DesktopDirect feature set provides a scalable remote desktop capability from PCs and mobile devices that is both user and administrator friendly.

With DesktopDirect, the Conference's security policies are enforced consistently, and data never leaves the Conference's network to ensure security of sensitive personal and Conference information. In addition, the AG Series provides high-performance 2048-bit SSL encryption, and endpoint security including device-based identification, host checking, cache cleaning and adaptive policies. A security-hardened OS with a proprietary SSL stack (which is not affected by OpenSSL vulnerabilities like Heartbleed or Bash) provide a strong foundation for secure remote access.

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Executive Director for Information Technology
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

In use, Galotta sets up users with the Microsoft remote desktop app within their iPads. Users authenticate through Active Directory, and are presented with a customized, branded portal delivered by the AG Series that serves as a bridge to applications running behind the firewall. "It's seamless for users; there's no real user intervention required other than ActiveX," noted Galotta. "Users can access their office desktop directly, just like they were sitting at their desk."

Benefits

Through Array's AG Series SSL VPN, Conference staff members have the ability to access their desktop applications anywhere, anytime, and from multiple device types – allowing them to access their organization's confidential data without fear of compromise, and keeping clients' personal information safe from interception.

"Just the idea of being able to use a mobile or remote device and stay secure is very important, and it's incredibly easy for our staff members to use," said Galotta.

He added, "It just works; we've never had a problem with it. Support over the years has been very good, and it's nice to work with a company that deals with people in a courteous and professional manner."

Summary

By upgrading to Array's next-generation AG Series secure access gateway, with DesktopDirect secure remote desktop access, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has gained the ability to support changing work styles as staff increasingly relies upon mobile devices to carry out their important work in the field, at home, or anywhere they are needed.

Personal confidential information of clients is safe from interception or inappropriate access, and staff has the confidence to work whenever, wherever required as they work toward their respective missions.

Documents, files, email

AG Series
SSL VPN

Internet

Smartphones, tablets, laptops, desktops

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