



Profile

One of the nation's largest providers of payday advances

More than 250 branches and 700 employees

Industry

Financial Services

Websense Integration

Websense Hosted Web Security

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Christian Alvarez

Database Administrator at Allied Cash Advance

case study: Allied Cash Advance

Allied Cash Advance Keeps Money Moving Safely

Overview

Founded in 1999 with a single branch in Northern California, Allied Cash Advance® has grown into one of the nation's largest providers of payday advances, with more than 250 branches in 12 states. Headquartered in Miami, Florida, Allied Cash Advance employs more than 700 team members.

The mission of Allied Cash Advance is to be the premier provider of payday advances in America. It prides itself in being a results-oriented company that provides superior service and support to its customers, team members, and communities. Dealing with critical financial issues requires computer systems that can assure security, confidentiality, and access.

The Problem

The payday advance business requires a good deal of time on the Internet to verify critical financial information. However, as employees at Allied Cash Advance visited popular Web sites such as social networking sites and search engines, they were unknowingly opening the door to viruses, phishing attacks, spyware and malware—and their computers were showing the strain. Allied Cash Advance deals with large amounts of personal data and has a special need for security in order to protect its essential information. Falling victim to phishing attacks or becoming infected with software that can read key strokes could cause considerable damage to the company.

Christian Alvarez, database administrator for Allied Cash Advance, suspected that employee time spent on risky sites was causing productivity and security issues. He was tasked to lead an initiative to improve Web security, but managing 700 computers in 257 branches—many with varying degrees of Internet connectivity—was not a simple task. The IT department often spent many hours trying to remotely clean infected machines, often without success.

After compiling a select group of Web sites necessary for business purposes, Alvarez decided to filter unauthorized sites that were inappropriate for the workplace and provided a conduit to viruses and malware. He first attempted to manage the problem by using the limited capabilities of his firewall, but this proved difficult because of the many remote branches.

Challenge

Protecting employees, corporate networks, and data across branch locations.

Solution

Websense Hosted Web Security provides protection while easing IT burden.

Benefits

Improved employee productivity and greater protection from Web-based threats.

About Websense

Websense, Inc. (NASDAQ: WBSN) Websense, the global leader in integrated Web, messaging, and data security, enables its customers' success by protecting essential information in the Web 2.0 world. Only Websense solutions provide complete visibility and control over who may use Web, email, or information resources; what information must be protected; how information can be exchanged; and where users and information can go on the Internet. Websense keeps employees productive on any network, anytime and anywhere, to help businesses realize the full potential of constant connectivity while minimizing the risks of data leaks due to human error and malicious attacks. Websense is Essential Information Protection™.

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The Solution

Seeking an economical solution, Alvarez talked to other vendors and discovered Websense® Hosted Web Security.

"I was looking for a product that I could control centrally, but that would also protect the computers in all of our branches—without having to install something on each machine," he states. "With Websense Hosted Web Security, when I make a change, it's immediately effective throughout whichever branches I choose."

Websense Hosted Web Security provides centralized Web malware protection and granular Web filtering. The hosted deployment model provides centralized policy management for any type of environment, including those with remote locations and mobile laptops. Websense Hosted Web Security is a complete solution that can be layered with existing on-premise security to provide additional Web malware protection. Guaranteed by industry-leading service level agreements, Websense Hosted Web Security eliminates the complexity and uncertainty of managing Web-based threats, while simplifying policy administration for all users within the organization.

Alvarez ran a demo version of Websense Hosted Web Security at a few locations and, using the reporting features, discovered how much time employees were spending on non-work-related sites and which sites were most visited. Rather than wrestle with the diverse requirements of the various ISPs he relied on, Alvarez created global and regional policies within Websense Hosted Web Security, then applied them to his remote computers. When Alvarez makes adjustments, all are automatically updated.

The Results

Increased Productivity at Remote Branches

With Websense Hosted Web Security, Alvarez discovered that many employees were spending their work time on social networking or gaming sites. Specifically, the Websense reports showed multiple attempts to visit a particular gaming site at one business branch. "At first the team members were surprised to learn they could no longer visit those sites, but pretty quickly the culture changed and they began to focus more on their work," says Alvarez. "The team has become more productive."

Reduced Exposure to Malware, Spyware, Phishing Attacks and Viruses

With the large amount of personal and financial data that Allied Cash Advance manages, it's critical that the company protect its networks and data. With Websense Hosted Web Security, employees are prevented from visiting Web sites that are likely to download toolbars and other elements that often hide malware and spyware.

On-Demand Solution Eases IT Burden

Before implementing Websense Hosted Web Security, Alvarez and his team spent countless hours cleaning or replacing infected computers every week. To guarantee that no location was ever without a computer for long, the IT team found they were often pulled away from important projects. "My IT team couldn't keep up with all the malware, viruses, and spyware tying up our remote computers and we were unable to focus on other critical projects," says Alvarez. "With Websense Hosted Web Security, my team and I can go home on time now and then!"

For a free evaluation of all Websense products or to view our online demos, visit www.websense.com/evaluations.