



City of Kamloops Chooses Prevention-First Protection for Email and Business Continuity

INDUSTRY

Government

HEADQUARTERS

Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada

COMPANY SIZE

760 Employees

PARTNER

VCURA Cybersecurity

OVERVIEW

Kamloops is a vibrant city offering a unique blend of urban and outdoor living with stunning natural beauty that includes mountains, lakes, and river. The city is a four-seasons destination for outdoor adventures, as well as food, arts and culture. Kamloops is also known as Canada's Tournament Capital, hosting more than 100 tournaments annually at world-class sports facilities.

OUR SOLUTION



Quantum

Deep Learning & AI Driven Network Security



Harmony

Highest Level of Security for Remote Users



With Check Point Harmony Email & Collaboration, we're blocking thousands more emails each month. Any one of those emails could have been clicked on and caused ransomware, identify theft or worse. We feel much more comfortable facing the growing wave of phishing and BEC emails that we're seeing.

Piotr Baltakis, Manager of Infrastructure and Security, City of Kamloops



CHALLENGE

The City of Kamloops' IT team is instrumental in ensuring the availability and security of the city's website, digital services and critical operations. For Piotr Baltakis, Manager of Infrastructure and Security for the City of Kamloops, security is as essential for business continuity as it is for protecting citizen data.

"We take a 'prevention first' approach to security in addition to layering protection and having a robust recovery plan in place," he said. "As we address specific security challenges, we look for solutions that deliver measurable value while enabling us to achieve strategic outcomes."

Kamloops recently faced a growing problem of business email compromise (BEC) or "impersonation" emails. BEC attacks are financially damaging and difficult to stop. Profiles and email addresses for the mayor and council Members are public information on the city's website, making it easy for bad actors to target them with social engineering techniques. Phishing and BEC emails had become a daily problem. The city was using Microsoft 365 E5 Defender for Endpoint as its sole tool for e-mail security and decided to supplement the solution with additional protection.

"Rather than dedicating additional resources to tuning and configuring the existing solution," said Baltakis, "we decided to add a second layer of protection. An easy-to-use solution would help us maximize our defenses without impacting operations."

SOLUTION

In late 2022, the IT team worked with VCURA Cybersecurity, a Check Point partner, to evaluate solutions from multiple top-ranked vendors in the email gateway security category. Together, the city's IT team and VCURA narrowed the possibilities down to three products for testing, ultimately choosing Check Point Harmony Email & Collaboration.

"We chose Harmony Email & Collaboration because it had the fewest false positives and required the least amount of overhead and configuration," said Baltakis. "I didn't have to dedicate a full-time person to manage it—it's set and forget. And it will also catch anything malicious that Microsoft Defender might miss."

Kamloops also relies on four large enterprise Check Point Quantum Security Gateways to secure its network. Additional Quantum firewalls provide east-west protection for key operational sites and to identify and secure more critical SCADA infrastructure applications and traffic. The city is implementing all of Check Point's industry-leading security measures on the gateways, including SandBlast threat emulation and extraction to analyze files for hidden malware and sanitize incoming documents into safe formats.

"We are committed to future-proofing our infrastructure as we continue to expand digital services," said Baltakis. "VCURA is helping us maximize these layers of protection in our environment. The partnership adds tremendous value to our own internal team's capabilities."

OUTCOME

Baltakis and his team know that a threat actor only has to succeed once to inflict damage to the organization. Now with Check Point Harmony Email & Collaboration, Kamloops has shifted the odds in its favor. With Harmony Email & Collaboration, Kamloops stopped more than 14,000 phishing emails that evaded the existing email protection. It also stopped hundreds more impersonation emails, as well as emails containing malware.

“With Check Point Harmony Email & Collaboration, we’re blocking thousands more emails each month,” he said. “Any one of those emails could have been clicked on and caused ransomware, identify theft or worse. We feel much more comfortable facing the growing wave of phishing and BEC emails that we’re seeing.”

With a consistently low false positive rate, Harmony Email & Collaboration has freed the Kamloops IT and help desk teams to focus on citizens’ needs first. After a quick install, it simply blocks malicious emails and almost manages itself. Users aren’t distracted by alerts and staff members don’t have to inspect or make decisions about blocked emails.

“Harmony Email & Collaboration is so intuitive that we can use it successfully without much training,” said Baltakis. “People joining our team with no previous Check Point experience ramp up to intermediate levels of expertise very quickly, which minimizes the time and expense normally associated with training.”

The Kamloops IT team is systematically implementing additional layers of protection through the Quantum Security Gateways and leveraging them to achieve higher-level security goals. For example, the ability to sandbox and scan email attachments is protecting users from malicious documents and will also enable the city to perform behavior-based analysis of attachments in the future. If geolocation features show traffic coming to the website from nation-states, the team will know that the traffic is not from local residents and more likely to have malicious intent. With this visibility, they can further strengthen awareness and defenses to thwart possible malware or ransomware attacks.

“Check Point delivers sound technology, market-leading protection, and solid partnership,” said Baltakis. “Our Check Point team goes above and beyond, helping us align our defenses with current threats and future trends, such as Secure Access Service Edge (SASE). We really count on that. It’s a huge side benefit of choosing Check Point products.”

ABOUT VCURA CYBERSECURITY

VCURA is a high-performance cybersecurity team with a proven track record of helping customers with the most challenging and complex projects. We provide technical, integration, process and project skills to connect the dots between business need, project requirements and technical implementation. VCURA delivers cybersecurity assessments, solution implementation, managed services and training solutions. VCURA is headquartered in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

ABOUT CHECK POINT

Check Point Software Technologies Ltd. (www.checkpoint.com) is a leading provider of cyber security solutions to corporate enterprises and governments globally. Check Point Infinity's portfolio of solutions protects enterprises and public organizations from 5th generation cyber-attacks with an industry leading catch rate of malware, ransomware and other threats. Infinity comprises three core pillars delivering uncompromised security and generation V threat prevention across enterprise environments: Check Point Harmony, for remote users; Check Point CloudGuard, to automatically secure clouds; and Check Point Quantum, to protect network perimeters and datacenters, all controlled by the industry's most comprehensive, intuitive unified security management; Check Point Horizon, a prevention-first security operations suite. Check Point protects over 100,000 organizations of all sizes.

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