Greek Ministry of Education Protects 65,000 Distance Learners with ZoneAlarm

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

Customer Profile
The Greek Ministry of Education administers the country's public schools, curriculum and policies.

Challenge
- Protect 65,000 tablets used for distance learning from cyber security threats
- Ensure students are protected from inappropriate websites and online predators
- Prevent device downtime and learning interruptions due to security threats

Solution
- Check Point ZoneAlarm for Institutions mobile security app

Benefits
- Enabled students and teachers to safely download teaching apps and browse the web
- Blocked malicious apps, URLs, zero-day threats, and phishing attacks
- Simplified transition to distance learning with preset security settings

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Overview

Established in 1833, the Greek Ministry of Education administers the country's education system. It manages all public schools, formulates and implements legislation, administers the budget, coordinates national university entrance examinations, sets up the national curriculum, appoints public school teaching staff, and coordinates other services.

Business Challenge
Ensuring Education Continuity

In 2020, the coronavirus presented the Greek Ministry of Education with a huge challenge. With schools closed, the Ministry now needed to deliver the same high-caliber education to students and teachers remotely. Although many students' families had computers or mobile devices at home, students from low-income homes did not have access to classes that now were delivered via distance learning.

"We had to create a new infrastructure solution for these students," said Socrates Chatzikonstantinou, Assistant Manager of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) Department for the Ministry of Education. "Our solution was to procure and distribute tablets to 65,000 students and teachers. However, we first needed to ensure that these devices would be secure."
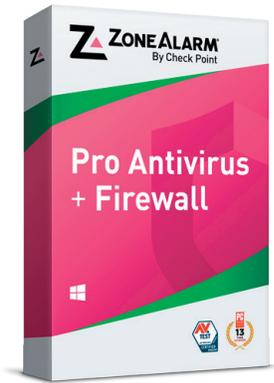
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Chatzikonstantinou's team conducted a study and market research to define the security requirements. First, any security solution installed on the tablets had to include Greek language settings. Next, the solution had to effectively protect students from inappropriate content and online predators. Finally, the tablets had to be completely reliable each day so students could attend classes. Neither cyber security attacks nor cumbersome security software could be allowed to slow performance or shut down learning.

SOLUTION
Passing the Test with Flying Colors

After defining their requirements, the Ministry held a public tender. Five vendors offered solutions. To narrow the choices further, the Ministry asked several vendors to participate in live security tests.

"We needed a standalone security solution for the tablets because it would be too difficult to manage 65,000 tablets centrally," said Mr. Chatzikonstantinou. "Check Point ZoneAlarm was included in our live testing because it is self-managing, affordable, and was readily available in Greek."

Prior to the tender, Check Point created a special version of ZoneAlarm mobile security app. Key settings and interface features were localized to Greek, making it easy for students and teachers to use. Check Point also customized ZoneAlarm settings to predefine accessibility and URL filtering permissions. This ensured that students could not change settings and inadvertently be exposed to inappropriate Internet content. The new version was branded as "ZoneAlarm for Institutions". Finally, the Check Point team worked with multiple hardware partners to tailor their final proposals to meet the Ministry's needs.

Check Point went above and beyond to meet our requirements," said Mr. Chatzikonstantinou. "ZoneAlarm passed every test with flying colors, and it was the only solution that protected the tablets against zero-day threats."

Check Point ZoneAlarm for Institutions offers a complete security solution for the mobile devices purchased by the ministry for students. Enterprise-grade technology protects tablets and software from the most advanced cyber attacks. ZoneAlarm includes protection against malicious apps, best-in-class zero-day Anti Phishing, Wi-Fi attacks detection and award-winning anti-ransomware protection. In addition, the users get a superb user experience and complete privacy.

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Benefits

Powerful Defenses Protect Students

With ZoneAlarm, students and teachers can download teaching apps and browse the web without concern. ZoneAlarm blocks malicious apps before they can be installed and validates every link that is clicked against Check Point ThreatCloud, the world's largest cyber intelligence network. If a URL is detected as malicious, users are immediately alerted not to enter the site.

"Check Point ZoneAlarm greatly reduces the risks associated with students using the Internet," said Mr. Chatzikonstantinou. "We're confident that threats cannot harm software or the hard drives, thereby taking the devices offline. The tablets stay in top shape for everyday use."

Safe Surfing Made Easy

Preset filtering capabilities greatly simplified rolling out the tablets. Teachers and parents did not need to know how to set up or fine-tune security software and settings. When students turn on their tablets, protection is transparent and immediate.

"Check Point ZoneAlarm is doing a great job," said Mr. Chatzikonstantinou. "In the age of coronavirus, distance learning is how students receive their education.
We have significant peace of mind that we can continue to deliver the best possible education, no matter whether in-person or remote."