



Expanding Danish Municipality Bolsters Network Security With TippingPoint™ Intrusion Prevention Systems

The Challenge: Vejen Kommune is a typical Danish town facing an unusual IT challenge. As the largest population center of four adjoining towns, Vejen was chosen to expand its administration and IT network to support its neighbors by early 2007 under Denmark's Triangle Region development initiative. The new district, also called Vejen, will merge administrations of the towns of Vejen, Brørup, Holsted, and Rødding into a single entity to boost regional development through streamlined operations.

For Vejen's five person IT staff, the initiative means expanding its multi-vendor Gigabit and Fast Ethernet network and ensuring that its growing volume of e-government services, including online tax payments, license application filings, and housing services, function without intrusions. To accomplish this purpose, Vejen must also guard against increasing waves of computer viruses, malware, and Denial of Service (DoS) attacks.

Previously, however, Vejen's only defense against malicious attacks was its Cisco PIX firewall, Symantec Antivirus and MXtreme email scanning system from Borderware. "Despite these, our network was continually bombarded by attacks, particularly Trojans and worms coming from the Internet," said Peter Vogensen, IT consultant to Vejen. Although Microsoft service packs were sent to patch security breaches, Vejen's network often became saturated with virus-spawned data.

In response to each infection, Vejen IT staffers had to clean 30 servers and more than 500 PCs. "There just wasn't time to install all of the patches and support all of our users," said Vogensen. "Our worst infection was a worm on

our accounting department server. That could have prevented us from accessing general ledger applications and meeting our payroll and tax reporting obligations."

With these intrusions in mind, Vejen town administrators realized that successfully taking on its expanded responsibilities rested on finding an effective security solution to safeguard its network.

Why_Solutions_from_3Com_and_TippingPoint,_a_division_of_3Com

As a first step, Vejen purchased a software solution based on FreeBSD, which logged all attacks and alerted network administrators to their source IP addresses. "NVT showed us attack volumes, but didn't block them from penetrating the network," recalled Vogensen.

Vejen then sought an enterprise-class network security solution that would proactively shield servers, desktops, and data automatically and minimize the need for manual intervention by its IT staff. After surveying the marketplace, Vejen selected the TippingPoint? Intrusion Prevention System (IPS) to protect its network.

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***Peter Vogensen
IT Consultant
Vejen Kommune***

“TippingPoint provides the most proactive, pervasive network protection available,” said Vogensen. “TippingPoint solutions have the scalability to support expanding networks like ours and the features to secure them with little to no intervention by IT staff.”

Deployed in late September 2004 in the Vejen Town Hall, the TippingPoint solution provides a first line of defense before malicious Internet traffic reaches switches, routers, or servers. The TippingPoint IPS device fully inspects every packet as it enters the network, blocking all threats, including worms, Trojans, spyware, and DoS attacks, while maintaining a log of all attacks. TippingPoint’s underlying Threat Suppression Engine applies pipelined and massively parallel processing technologies to perform thousands of checks on each packet flow simultaneously. It also enables Vejen to reconfigure the IPS easily to accommodate its growing network as the four towns merge, extending the same impenetrable security to the newly formed district.

“Our TippingPoint IPS ensures that we have space on the servers to install the formal vendor patches or updates when they arrive,” said Vogensen. In a three week period during October 2005 alone, the TippingPoint solution blocked 815,430 attacks against the Vejen network, turning back 2,631 invalid packets in the process.

Using TippingPoint’s innovative Digital Vaccine? service, Vejen updates the IPS with TippingPoint virtual software patches for its servers within 12 hours after Microsoft or other vendors release security bulletins about new viruses that surface elsewhere in the world. TippingPoint patches are distributed to the network IPS, providing a layer of protection for servers and desktops and fully inoculating them in virtually every case before an attack.

“The Digital Vaccine service is fantastic,” said Vogensen. “By blocking threats from entering our network before any damage occurs, the update

service is the reason why Vejen’s network has not been infected once since the TippingPoint IPS was installed. Without it, we would almost assuredly be infected on a constant basis.”

Updates from TippingPoint’s Digital Vaccine service are sent to the IPS devices throughout the network, throwing up an impenetrable shield against malicious traffic, no matter how fast attacks rain down on the network. Likewise, the simplified Graphical User Interface within TippingPoint allows any Vejen IT staffer to easily monitor and adjust security services without specialized expertise or training.

“The speed and ease of use we have with TippingPoint are invaluable assets as we merge our network with those of the other three towns,” said Vogensen. Vejen also benefits greatly from the solution’s automatic saving of configuration files. “Should we experience a hardware failure and need to swap out components,” noted Vogensen, “we have a precise record of our security configurations and don’t have to spend unnecessary time reconfiguring replacement equipment.”

Benefits_Summary

Protected by its TippingPoint IPS, Vejen can now fulfill Denmark’s Triangle Region initiative with complete protection against cyber threats. By examining every incoming packet at Gigabit speed and near-zero latency, TippingPoint maintains the integrity of Vejen’s network, allowing town employees to sustain their productivity and constituent service to effectively satisfy taxpayers’ needs.

“With our TippingPoint IPS, we’re able to concentrate our efforts on ensuring that merged systems and applications work well together without worrying about security threats from the Internet,” said Vogensen. “The greatest benefit TippingPoint provides is how well it performs without our attention and how much peace of mind that gives us. We couldn’t ask for anything more.”

Corporate_Headquarters: 7501B North Capital of Texas Hwy. > Austin, Texas 78731 USA > +1 512 681 8000 > +1 888 TRUE IPS

European_Headquarters: Herengracht 466, 2nd Floor > 1017 CA Amsterdam, The Netherlands > +31 20 521 0450

Asia_Pacific_Headquarters: 47 Scotts Road #11-03 Goldbell Towers > Singapore 228233 > +65 6213 5999