Moving Security to the Cloud

By Brian Albright, *Business Solutions* **magazine**

An upgrade to a hosted antivirus solution helped this VAR improve a long-time client's network performance.

Generally speaking, resellers don't like to pit their solutions offerings against each other in specific client installs. But when a solution is no longer working, or if a new product comes along that may be a better fit for a particular client, providing value to the customer takes precedence.

TLIC Worldwide, an Exeter, RI,-based VAR that specializes in maintenance renewals, software licensing, hardware, and network management, recently replaced a client's antivirus solution in order to help improve network performance and scan speed. By moving from the on-premise solution that TLIC previously installed to a cloud-based product, the client freed up valuable server space and cut scan times that were bogging down the network.

The client, a midsize insurance provider based in Nevada, was an existing customer for TLIC. The VAR had provided consulting and licensing assistance with a variety of Microsoft and Barracuda products for the past five years. The company had seen the performance of its existing antivirus system degrade over time, and it was beginning to affect overall network performance. "They had some specific pain points they wanted to address, namely related to footprint and the overall scan speed they were experiencing," says Matt Biben, sales manager at TLIC. "Their existing scan engine was taking longer and longer to complete scans."

According to Biben, TLIC works with clients on an ongoing basis so that when issues with particular products arise, it can address them quickly before larger problems develop that could risk the client relationship. "What makes us a bit different is that we are proactive," Biben says. "We are in constant contact with customers, verifying that the products they have are working as they should be. We sell a range of products and solutions, including hardware, which can fit into a customer's network or system environment. By keeping in close contact with the client base, we generate more opportunities to secure that partnership."

AT A GLANCE

Company » TLIC Worldwide

Partner Type » Reseller

Location » Exeter, RI

CLOUD-BASED SOLUTION SAVES TIME, SPACE

After evaluating some options, Biben says the company opted for a hosted scan tool that was relatively new to the company's solutions portfolio, Webroot SecureAnywhere® virus protection solution. The cloud-based threat detection system can secure endpoints, corporate networks, and mobile devices. According to Biben, TLIC had heard of Webroot as a low footprint option with faster scan speeds and a relatively rapid install time — a nearly perfect fit, given the problems the client had reported.

The new solution also had another advantage: The client could test the solution "live" while the previous system was still running. "The nice thing about Webroot is that you don't have to disable or uninstall a competitive scan product to run it," Biben says. "Most products require you to only enable one engine at a time. In this case, the client didn't want to do that. They wanted to maintain the current product and test the functionality of Webroot. This is one of the only products I know of that allows you to do that."

Being able to test the solution live and compare it to the other product wound up being a critical part of pitching the upgrade. "They could put both products next to each other in the same environment and evaluate the performance," Biben says. "The results were very favorable for Webroot."

Because the solution is cloud-based, scan times improve and the solution doesn't take up any valuable server space at the client facility. "That's another reason it was an easy sell," Biben says. "They were looking to take some shelf space away from managing a dedicated antivirus program."

Once the client agreed to upgrade to the new solution, Biben says the installation was fast, with all 350 computers and servers up and running simultaneously. "Another issue with moving from one solution to another is that you have to remove the old one to do that," Biben says. "There is typically a slow migration process where you change out a few computers at a time. In this case, the install was completely done before we even started uninstalling the other clients'. Once Webroot was running on all of the devices, there was no downtime during which the machines were unprotected to complete the migration. It was done seamlessly."

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Biben says TLIC typically tries to avoid replacing solutions the company has installed with competing products, but in this case there was a clear need for performance improvement. "We work for our clients, and if they have an issue with a current product, our job as a value-added reseller is to get them a product that is functional in their environment," Biben says. "It's never our objective to have one vendor displace another. We prefer to stick with a specific vendor for an account and grow that partnership. But when a client says that something is not working for them, and they've gone through the support channels and it still isn't working, then it's our job to provide them with a solution."

The Webroot system has been live for approximately two years. "They now have a product that suits their needs," Biben says. "They are not having the same issues with network slowdowns that they had before."

The move to hosted or SaaS solutions has been a smooth one for TLIC. In the antivirus market, that model has been fairly common for several years. "The margins for on-premise versus SaaS are about the same," Biben says. "One thing I will say is that, generally speaking, SaaS products are going to be more expensive than on-premise; however, the client gets some of that server space back when the solution is hosted — so that's the trade-off."

Biben says he expects to see more customers migrate to cloud-based systems in the future. "We're seeing more and more growth on the application side for cloud," Biben says.

However, large enterprises still seem to prefer on-premise solutions. "For those specifically going after customers where SaaS is an effective solution, I think that small to midsize businesses and the lower midmarket are really the strike zone," Biben says. "That's pretty much our market. When we sell these solutions, we're working with clients that see the value in SaaS products."

About Webroot

Webroot is bringing the power of cloud-based software-as-a-service (SaaS) to Internet security with its suite of Webroot SecureAnywhere® offerings for consumers and businesses, as well as offering its security intelligence solutions to cybersecurity organizations, such as Palo Alto Networks, F5 Networks, Corero, Juniper, and others. Founded in 1997 and headquartered in Colorado, Webroot is the largest privately held Internet security organization based in the United States — operating globally across North America, Europe and the Asia Pacific region. For more information on our products, services and security visit: www.webroot.com, the **Webroot Threat Blog:** http://blog.webroot.com or **Webroot on Twitter:** http://twitter.com/webroot.

World Headquarters
385 Interlocken Crescent
Suite 800
Broomfield, Colorado 80021 USA
800 772 9383

Webroot EMEA
6th floor, Block A,
1 George's Quay Plaza
George's Quay, Dublin 2, Ireland
+44 (0)870 1417 070

Webroot APAC
Suite 1402, Level 14, Tower A
821 Pacific Highway
Chatswood, NSW 2067, Australia
+61 (0) 2 8071 1900