avast! Case Studies

Pearl River Community College – Security in education

For over 100 years, Pearl River Community College in Poplarville, Mississippi has been providing students with the skills they need to succeed in life. As the state's first public two-year institution of higher learning, PRCC was built with the mission to inform and instruct students while keeping them ahead of the rapidly changing job market. As part of this goal, providing the latest technology is essential to daily activities on campus.

Huff Hall, Pearl River Community College

With over 500 employees, thousands of students and diverse classes ranging from accounting to welding, protecting every computer on the PRCC network from malware can be a challenge.

"Lots of different classes mean lots of different software," says Jason Bordelon, Network and Systems Specialist at PRCC. "This is demanding on our IT staff because it requires us to troubleshoot and maintain software on which we have often received no training."

To help combat viruses and malware across the college, Pearl River Community College switched from Trend Micro to avast! Antivirus software for a solution that fit their unique requirements and budget.

"We require an antivirus solution that plays well with this wide variety of software," explains Mr. Bordelon. "Trend Micro did not offer compatibility with Windows Vista without a costly upgrade. It also seemed to have trouble keeping up with the latest viruses. I also used the demo version of avast! for its boot-time scan to remove viruses that Trend Micro could not."

EASY TO SWITCH

Deploying a new antivirus solution across the 1,500 computers on the PRCC network has been an easy task thanks to the avast! Distributed Network Manager. "Trend Micro required we go to a locally hosted web site to install the client on each PC. avast! allowed us to push out the software using group policy, and still maintain a local website for single installs after the initial rollout," says Mr. Bordelon.

This example of deployment flexibility combined with cost savings made switching an easy decision.

"The fact that avast! was half the price of what we were paying was a pretty significant factor. We saved roughly $8,000 the first year we switched to avast!," explains Mr. Bordelon. Plus, with lower virus-related troubleshooting calls and network infections, the college has been able to save valuable time for IT staff.

BACKED BY EXPERT SUPPORT

QueCentric LLC, based in Birmingham, Alabama, helped PRCC switch to avast! and provides expert technical support for the college. As the only avast! Gold Reseller in the Southeast, QueCentric specializes in working with higher education customers to build custom software configurations that fit their budget and existing infrastructure.

Company name	Pearl River Community College (http://www.prcc.edu)
Sector	Higher Education
Location	Poplarville, Mississippi
Number of employees	596
Number of protected computers	1,500
Products purchased	avast! 4.8 NetClient & Server Edition

"Schools often have unique requirements when deploying new software," explains Colin Quarello, CEO of QueCentric. "From research laboratories to library computers, avast! consistently delivers antivirus protection that works wonderfully in higher education networks."

RESULTS

"avast! is very easy to deploy and use," says Mr. Bordelon. "The software is much less intrusive and just quietly moves infected files to the chest. I get an email, but the end user is oblivious in most cases. I would recommend avast!"

With avast! Antivirus software and QueCentric, PRCC will continue to lead the way in higher education while protecting their technology for years to come.

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Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHS Trust – Keeping health professionals vaccinated against viruses

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is a forward-thinking acute hospital serving the communities of West Norfolk, South Lincolnshire and North East Cambridgeshire in Great Britain. The hospital employs 2,400 staff with an annual budget of around £140 million. It is rated as one of the 12 most efficient NHS hospitals in terms of value for money. Part of the efficiency savings are due to the hospital's innovative approach to managing ICT resources for its 1,600 computer users at its main complex on the outskirts of King's Lynn, Norfolk.

In 2006, the hospital realized its computer network was highly insecure after a series of malware attacks penetrated the incumbent anti-virus software. Senior hospital management decided to evaluate a number of alternatives in its search for more effective protection. In addition to the big names in antivirus software, one manager had heard about avast! from a relative who had successfully used it on their home PC. The hospital got a free copy of avast! and ran it on a test computer.

Cleaning up the malware left behind by others

"This trial of avast! cleared up an assortment of malware left behind by previous antivirus software", explained Nick Castleton, a senior ICT technician at the Trust. "Based on that experience, we then started evaluating avast! as a possible replacement for the entire Trust." The hospital then approached Avosec, AVAST's UK avast! distributor for technical assistance and for special NHS pricing. The trust subsequently deployed avast! on 118 servers and over 1500 desktops, "and our virus activity dropped off considerably," Castleton adds.

With avast! in place, the hospital has had a dramatic increase in its level of antivirus and malware protection, "We have an increased detection rate and we now have minimal downtime due to infections," explains Castleton, "The number of false positives has generally been low and even during the Conflicker outbreak, we worked directly with both Avosec and AVAST and were able to stay operational throughout the processes."

Fast "zero day" response

Over the last four years, the hospital has steadily expanded the number of licences it has for avast! as well as undergoing a smooth transition to version 4.8. In the case of a recent "zero day" outbreak which Castleton puts down in part to a restriction on being able to patch certain operating systems, avast dispatched a technical team to the site who worked with the Trust to isolate the problem on one particular server and remove the infected application. "The response was fantastic and helped us to minimize the impact of the outbreak," Castleton comments.

James Norris, general manager of Avosec who worked extensively with the trust on the installation of avast added, "Four years ago, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was typical of many healthcare organisations which are reliant on IT systems and open internet access but were unaware of the power of avast! compared to incumbent 'big brand' AV software. The different level of protection is striking and can easily be evaluated with a simple – and free – download of avast!"

COMPANY NAME	Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHS Trust
SECTOR	Healthcare
LOCATION	Norfolk, UK
WEBSITE	www.qehkl.nhs.uk/
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	2,400
NETWORK DESCRIPTION	
NUMBER OF PROTECTED COMPUTERS	118 servers and 1,500 PCs
SOLUTION	avast! v4.8

Elk Hill – Digital Peace of Mind for Youth-at-Risk

Young people need room for a second chance – but malware does not. With avast! antivirus keeping their computers safe from malware, the Elk Hill nonprofit in Virginia can focus on its core mission – giving children the space and conditions they need to develop into responsible adults.

Elk Hill works with more than 400 troubled young people in three primary areas – individualized tutoring, a residential community, and in-home counseling.

Internet filters are not enough

Computers and technology play an integral role in this. The 60 computers at Elk Hill's facilities are widely used on a daily basis. While internet filters are in place to keep young people from straying too far, 100-percent vigilance is impossible. Even within the educational realm, there are infected and malicious web sites.

"Throughout our computer network, we found we were very susceptible to malware despite our previous antivirus software," said Katie Cox, administrative assistant at Elk Hill.

Elk Hill realized firsthand that infected computers can cause havoc for their young clients as well as for office personnel needing to keep personal client information safe. "At best, malware's an inconvenience," pointed out Ms. Cox. "At worse, it's a great loss of time and resources to fix computers that are taken down in waves via malware."

Easy centralized management

Dissatisfied with other antivirus programs – most recently AVG – Elk Hill set out to find a more effective solution. They purchased their avast! software licenses from Wheat Systems of Glen Allen, Virginia. "We deployed avast! from a central server at Elk Hill to all their machines," said Chad Christianson, CIO at Wheat Systems. "It's really easy to use avast! from a single centralized server so they can monitor and clean up all computers."

Keeping the class in order

With avast!, the catastrophic waves of infection that used to occur on a regular basis have been eliminated, and a recent outbreak was limited to a single computer. Through it all, avast! kept all other machines safe, avoiding what could have been a major disruption and security risk. With their previous antivirus solutions, the results were significantly worse. "When they get a virus now, they can also see where it came from – a path," explains Mr. Christianson. "It saves them IT costs."

For Elk Hill, avast! antivirus is a tool to keep them on track as they help local youth. "avast! has proved to be a rapid and effective solution for keeping our system up and running despite constant usage by an adventurous audience," stated Ms. Cox.

COMPANY NAME	Elk Hill
SECTOR	Social services, education
LOCATION	Goochland, Virginia
WEBSITE	www.elkhill.com
NETWORK DESCRIPTION	Centrally administered network of PCs
NUMBER OF PROTECTED COMPUTERS	60 PCs
SOLUTION	avast! v4.8 ADMN

Kent and Medway Health Informatics Service – Intensive care without the trauma

Kent and Medway Health Informatics Service (KMHIS) deliver Information Management and Technology services to 15 National Health Service organisations across Kent. Its customers are geographically spread across 12 major sites including East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust, the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, NHS Medway and three PCTs as well as smaller local sites including desktop support to Medway and East Kent GP surgeries and hospices. The KMHIS mission is to deliver the best information services to enable excellent patient care.

The importance of IT in the NHS has grown rapidly over the last decade and now spans almost every aspect of health care. KMHIS is responsible for protecting the security of a whole host of systems including X-Ray machines connected to PCs, Enterprise Resource Planning system, Procurement, HR and specialist clinical systems for delivering vital patient care in addition to thousands of desktop PC's, laptops and servers, developing bespoke systems including web development and running a service desk operation and GP support services.

Manageability is a major criteria

With over 30,000 users relying on KMHIS for the delivery of IT, the service regularly evaluates its key platforms to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose and provide the best value for money. For software such as antivirus and malware, manageability is a major criteria as with thousands of users running the same software, any failure to stop an active threat or even false alarms can generate a major surge in demand for helpdesk services and impact the smooth operation of its NHS clients.

Dean Stickells, a senior Infrastructure Manager for KMHIS, said "As part of our service evaluation process we are constantly looking to improve our update and reporting systems as well the speed at which our engineers can update and complete the installation of the latest versions of software. This is why we area always looking for the 'best of breed' product."

Fast updates and competitively priced

The KMHIS is also keen as a service provider to contribute to the NHS's Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention agenda by negotiating both a competitive price and improving efficiency: "In a nutshell," said Dean "on behalf of our Customers we look for software that is lightweight in nature to enable machines to update software faster, that is competitively priced and has a good management interface as these are factors which enable us to deliver an improved and more efficient service to the Customer**."**

The KMHIS began rolling out avast! to some of its user community in late 2006. "As licenses expire, we swap out to avast. It is also our mandate that users that occasionally connecting from their home machines over our VPN first install avast!"

Simplicity saves time and money

The simplicity of management of the system has given its NHS customers several additional benefits one of which includes time saving for engineers as Stickells explains: "We were having to manually test and communicate with individual users to ensure that all machines were properly

updated. Now we can cover a lot of sites much more quickly and efficiently by having a desktop antivirus. As a service provider, avast! has done what it claimed it would do."

COMPANY NAME	NHS Kent and Medway Health Informatics Service
SECTOR	Healthcare, IT services
LOCATION	Kent, UK
WEBSITE	www.kmhis.nhs.uk
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	256
NUMBER OF PROTECTED COMPUTERS	19,829 PCs
SOLUTION	avast! v4.8

The Russian Television and Radio Broadcasting Company – In a competitive world, home protection matters at the office

The Russian Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (VGTRK), the state-managed media group for the Russian Federation, had problems with its internet security protection.

VGTRK used a well-known antivirus program from a global company. However, there were complaints about computers bogging down or freezing, resulting in employees being unable to work as needed. Simply turning off the AV program was not a safe option as the Russian internet is regularly on the top five list among infected country domains according to the avast! Virus Lab research.

Media is a demanding environment

 "In this media business, in this country we simply can't afford to have a breakdown and to have computers not working fully. So we started looking for another product," said Sergey Golubencev, IT director at VGTRK. The area in need of protection was substantial: Over 4,000 PCs in almost 90 branches around Russia.

The IT department began looking at four major options: avast!, Eset, Kaspersky, and Symantec. For avast!, they simply downloaded the free version as they used at home for their tests. In their comparative assessment, they looked at costs, levels of protection, and ease of use.

 "The decisive factor in choosing the program was how it works. As a media company, we have an especially demanding IT environment," explained Mr. Golubencev. "Computers that prepare TV shows work with software with high requirements on hardware and computer resources. Because we have a large fleet of work stations, one of the most important issues is managing updates and installation of virus databases. Avast! fully satisfies our requirements and allows flexible installation and customized updates."

Protection that is tested and proved at home

Effective and free are key words for the avast! program. "We have a well-deserved reputation for providing effective protection that is easy on computers and people," stated Vince Steckler, CEO of AVAST Software. "Our Free version gives us global credibility as businesses would never want to trust a product that failed to protect their home computers. This shows why we offer the full-fledged protection of avast! Free Antivirus together with the paid product for businesses like VGTRK."

The opportunity with VGTRK emerged from the hard work of Distributor AVSOFT, and a Gold-level reseller AXOFT.   They helped with the message and facilitated the evaluation of avast! products with VGTRK. "avast! was easy to work with.   They spent the time needed to understand the customer's needs, and then helped us build a solution that was a perfect fit for VGTRK," said Alexey Tarasov, President of Avsoft.

COMPANY NAME	The Russian Television and Radio Broadcasting Company
SECTOR	Media, telecommunications
LOCATION	Moscow, Russia (main office)
NUMBER OF BRANCHES	90 branches around Russia
NUMBER OF PROTECTED COMPUTERS	4,200 PCs
PRODUCTS PURCHASED	2,200 licenses for avast! 4 Pro Edition, 2,000 licenses for avast! Enterprise Suite, separate licenses for plug-ins including ISA server 2100 and Exchange 2100