

STONESOFT



Case Study - Escambia County Sheriff's Office

Stonesoft Meets Rigorous Network Demands

StoneGate ensures vital information availability

Like everything else, modern police work is increasingly data-intensive and network-dependent. However, when you are supporting 450 police cruisers spread over a county of 876 square miles (including 214 square miles of water), "mobile" sometimes has a new meaning. Additionally, with vehicles in hot pursuit at more than 100 mph requiring vital data, lost information could mean the difference between life and death in extreme situations and "rigorous" gains extra emphasis in terms of network performance.

No one understands this better than Mac Magruder, deputy sheriff and MIS director for the Escambia County, Florida Sheriff's Office. In addition to the mobile computing units in hundreds of police cruisers, Magruder's department provides information sharing with the Pensacola Police Department, Pensacola Junior College, Gulf Breeze Police Department, State Attorney's office, Juvenile Justice Department, six precincts, a narcotics unit, fleet maintenance division, and two jails. In addition, the network connects with the FBI and more than 20 law enforcement agencies throughout Florida and Alabama for valuable information sharing.

Data services are vital to today's police operations. When a deputy sheriff pulls someone over, he already has basic information on the car – its description, the owner's name and other information, insurance information, whether it has been reported stolen – on the data screen in his cruiser. As soon as he has the driver's license, he can get information on the driver, including any police record. "Many crimes are solved and things detected at vehicle stops," Magruder says. "You can never be sure who is in the car, or what might happen." Officers have found themselves in unexpectedly dangerous confrontations at vehicle stops, so this information can be vital.

Similarly, when an incident is reported to 911, the cruisers get data showing what kind of call it is, location and other relevant information often before the dispatcher assigns the call to a unit. "We still use radio dispatch because we need to maintain the radio log as a record," Magruder says. However if an officer is close to the scene, he may respond before the dispatcher can make the call." Obviously, downtime is unacceptable in this environment and operations are 24x7x365.

Switching to StoneGate for greater management flexibility

When Magruder came on board he quickly realized the need to update the IT infrastructure for Escambia County Sheriff's Office. Given the valuable nature of the data that the department deals with, the security technology was high on the list of items that needed attention. Additionally, the security that had been in place at the time required a significant amount of budget to maintain and the customer support was not up to the standard that Magruder needed.

"When I first joined the Sheriff's Office, they didn't have firewalls. Internet activity was much lower then, and so security wasn't a big concern. Escambia County's Sheriff McNesby directed me to

bring us into the 21st century," said Magruder.

Magruder started out by installing another vendor's solution. However, after several run-ins with their service department and the inability to perform simple tasks, Magruder decided to switch to another vendor. He saw Stonesoft at an IT conference and was impressed with the flexibility and clustering capabilities of its StoneGate firewall and VPN. "Everything is GUI-driven from a single console, so doing things like changing IP addresses are trivial tasks," he explained.

Through a trial period, Magruder decided to experiment with the StoneGate Platform. During this time, he found that not only was the StoneGate technology reliable, it simply worked. He found that it provided the ease of set-up and administration that he needed. Beyond that, the StoneGate Management Center gave him and his team the view into the network's security to better manage the risks that this type of infrastructure faces on a daily basis. That was five years ago, and he says "The Stonesoft firewalls are the easiest I have ever used."

Patented Multi-Link technology ensures high availability

As you can imagine, always available data access is critical since an officer's safety could be on the line if the network dispatching information to the police car's mobile data dashboard devices is slow or down. That's why Magruder says that the StoneGate firewall/VPN solution is one of the most important products that he has installed into the network.

Leveraging the patented Multi-Link technology built into the firewall/VPNs, Magruder has been quickly impressed with the load balancing and clustering capabilities that ensure an always-on network that has been much easier to maintain. The Escambia County Sheriff's Office currently connects to the internet via a 10MB symmetrical fiber link and an asymmetrical 15/6MB cable link. Regardless of the type or number of connections in a network, Multi-Link ensures seamless network failover in the event of Internet access outages or lost connections between firewalls and outside networks. The clustering capabilities make it easy to expand networks, rather than start over with a new, larger system.

In addition, Stonesoft's technology is designed with the flexibility and scalability to support emerging technologies requiring greater bandwidth. Over the next four to five years, Escambia County will implement a digital 700/800 MHz system overlaid with mesh enabled architecture which will let the mobile user send and receive photo images and streaming

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Mac Magruder – Deputy Sheriff and MIS Director – Escambia County Sheriff's Office



video, which have multiple applications in police work. In addition, they will have the flexibility to set up “hot spots” for surveillance. “The less complicated the network, the better,” says Magruder. “Implementing the new network with the StoneGate appliances already in place is a simple process, requiring only minimal reprogramming.”

IPS to reduce internal network risks

Magruder is also focused on making the Escambia County Sheriff's Office IT infrastructure as secure as possible. He was using an Intrusion Detection System (IDS), but wanted a system that would help him be much more proactive rather than reactive to attacks to internal systems. Magruder liked StoneGate's firewall/VPN solution so much that he purchased the company's Intrusion Prevention System (IPS).

“One of the best practices we've implemented is the installation of the StoneGate IPS,” he said. “Immediately we've been able to detect and stop network traffic abuse and reduce the risks to our operation's data.” And since the IPS is part of the StoneGate Platform, he has the ease of set-up and administration that he needed. “Since installation, the IPS hasn't had to react to any network attacks...and that's good news. I have the assurance that our internal systems are protected,” he added.

While IPS has yet to become an industry norm, Magruder believes that most organizations will eventually come to include IPS solutions as part of a standard security set-up. IPS solutions protect the internal network, while firewalls provide perimeter protection and secure connectivity between different locations.

Unlike other systems, StoneGate IPS does not require individual alerts or signatures for every variant. It provides precise detection by combining

fingerprinting and protocol validation, along with customizable fingerprints to enhance the level of protection. The result is accurate proactive protection, with fewer false positives and false negatives.

A better ROI for tight government budgets

The restructuring of the IT infrastructure has taken some time, but Magruder feels that it is getting closer to what he feels is necessary. The biggest challenge he has faced is the budget. Since he works for a government entity, he is dependent on a fixed tax base rather than revenue, which limits some of the changes he would like to implement. He has had to get creative with the technology and look into resources that not only provide a reliable product, but that are also cost effective.

“Our partnership with Stonesoft and its excellent customer service has been crucial to our work,” says Magruder. “We've had the level of support needed to significantly upgrade the level of network security and ensure high availability for Escambia County Sheriff's Office at a price point that works with our IT budget.” In fact, he says that he has had immediate ROI and a lower total cost of ownership (TCO) using Stone-soft's products.

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Mac Magruder – Deputy Sheriff and MIS Director – Escambia County Sheriff's Office



Escambia County Sheriff's Office Challenges

- Ensuring secure, always available access to vital data to a variety of different outlets
- Lack of flexibility to accommodate network changes
- Limited support for new technologies requiring greater bandwidth
- Poor customer support
- Tight government budgets

About Escambia County Sheriff's Office

Escambia County, which includes Pensacola, is located in the extreme Northwestern corner of the Florida, bordered on the west and north by Alabama, on the east by Santa Rosa County, and on the South by the Gulf of Mexico. The County encompasses 661 square (land) miles, or 420,480 acres, with an additional 64,000 acres of water area. The current population is approximately 300,000. The Escambia County Sheriff's Office has over 1,100 employees and handles more than 600,000 calls per year.

About Stonesoft Corporation

Stonesoft Corporation (OMX: SFT1V) is an innovative provider of integrated network security solutions to secure the information flow of distributed organizations. Stonesoft customers include enterprises with growing business needs requiring advanced network security and always-on business connectivity.

StoneGate™ secure connectivity solution unifies firewall, VPN, IPS and SSL VPN blending network security, end-to-end availability and award-winning load balancing into a unified and centrally managed system. The key benefits of StoneGate secure connectivity solution include low TCO, excellent price-performance ratio and high ROI.

StoneGate Management Center provides unified management for StoneGate Firewall with VPN, IPS and SSL VPN. StoneGate Firewall and IPS work together to provide intelligent defense throughout the enterprise network, while StoneGate SSL VPN provides enhanced security for mobile and remote use.

Founded in 1990, Stonesoft Corporation is a global company with corporate headquarters in Helsinki, Finland and Americas headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. For more information, visit www.stonesoft.com.

Results with StoneGate

- Delivering secure, always-on connectivity
- Simple, GUI-driven administration and maintenance
- Easy integration and scalability to for emerging technologies
- Strong customer support
- Immediate ROI and lower TCO

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