

STONESOFT



Case Study – MedicAlert

StoneGate Advances Patient Safety Through E-health

StoneGate Platform provides strong foundation for MedicAlert's initiatives

When Canadian MedicAlert launched its online portal and electronic Personal Health Record in 2005, the organization required a solution that could ensure constant network access. The IT staff was tasked with selecting a network security platform that met stringent specifications. After MedicAlert evaluated Stonesoft's products, the team was immediately impressed with the comprehensive design of the StoneGate Platform, including Firewall, VPN and IPS. Stonesoft's Multi-Link™ technology eliminated the need for MedicAlert to install a costly and complex Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) setup as the technology also supports continuous, dual-ISP connectivity from within the integrated Firewall/VPN. In the end, MedicAlert deployed Stonesoft's Firewall/VPN and IPS appliances to support its security and network redundancy needs and to advance its e-health member services.

Network security and availability for emergency medical situations

Established in 1961, MedicAlert is an international nonprofit organization. Its core service consists of custom engraving MedicAlert bracelets with unique medical details, which are used to inform first responders of vital medical information in emergency situations. Canadian MedicAlert Foundation, one of MedicAlert's international affiliates, handles patient data for more than a million members. Given the sensitivity of the data that is collected, stored and released, MedicAlert has strict policies around security and privacy and network reliability.

In 2005, Canadian MedicAlert decided to expand its services via the Internet to provide members with more tools and resources to keep their patient records up-to-date. Providing members online access to their personal health record (PHR) ensures that the most accurate medical information is available at the time of an emergency. To effectively roll out and maintain this new online program, the organization needed an advanced networking solution to ensure network uptime.

"At MedicAlert, we believe that patient empowerment is key to patient safety," said Michael Shreve, Canadian MedicAlert director of systems and supply chain. "By allowing our members to securely view and update their records online, we increased member interaction."

Reliable network access to mission-critical data minus the complex setup

When MedicAlert assessed its new technology needs, it originally planned to augment its existing LAN-based Internet connection with a second Internet Service Provider (ISP) link for failover and redundancy. In planning the dual-ISP setup, MedicAlert evaluated the deployment of BGP, a costly and complex network configuration, while investigating alternative solutions. The focus of MedicAlert's IT staff was to find a cost-effective networking solution that met all of their technology criteria: privacy, security, availability and reliability.

Through a local ISP, MedicAlert was presented with Stonesoft and its Multi-Link technology as an alternative to BGP. After MedicAlert evaluated the products, the IT staff found that Stonesoft's Multi-Link technology could support multiple ISP failover connections and ensure fault tolerant inbound and outbound Internet access. Stonesoft not only

offered MedicAlert a savings by eliminating the cost and complexities associated with a BGP setup, but it also provided a robust, fully integrated security platform to meet their high standards for data protection.

"We were surprised to find a product that could handle both multi-homing and firewall capabilities in a single box," said Hovman Javdan, Canadian MedicAlert network and security administrator. "StoneGate was a good match for us because we were able to get the firewall clustering that we needed – at a very good cost – and the firewalls were out-of-the-box and Multi-Link capable."

Complete security from top to bottom-line

MedicAlert chose to deploy the StoneGate solutions, including two integrated clusters of Firewall/VPNs and two IPS appliances that were also fully integrated with the firewalls. The StoneGate solutions performed well once installed as they provided redundancy and enhanced network management for the newly deployed online PHR system. Also, MedicAlert was able to significantly save the upfront costs of architecting a BGP setup as StoneGate's Multi-Link technology offered a viable substitute as well as a better ROI.

"The StoneGate Firewall/VPN and IPS solutions offered us a great value, which in turn allowed us to allocate more resources for servers, application hardware and other gear so the entire platform deployed for the new PHR project supported increased redundancy," said Javdan. "We knew that we needed the redundant connection and security, but with StoneGate we found much more. The solution easily integrated from firewall to IPS, supporting advanced blacklisting, and was extremely cost effective."

In the production phase, MedicAlert did experience an instance when the Internet link failed, an issue caused by one of the ISPs. The StoneGate Multi-Link technology performed as stated and seamlessly failed over to another connection, ensuring uninterrupted network access while the other outage was addressed by the ISP.

MedicAlert was also able to take advantage of StoneGate's secure transmission and handling of sensitive member data to extend the availability of patient information, bringing its PHR's to a new level. Prior to the introduction of Canadian MedicAlert's online service, MedicAlert only released PHR information to first responders via its 24/7 Emergency hotline.

“The StoneGate Firewall/VPN and IPS solutions offered us a great value, which in turn allowed us to be more proactive in ensuring redundancy for our new servers, and networking devices for the entire project.”

Hovman Javdan – Network and Security Administrator – Canadian MedicAlert



“Stonesoft’s solutions have played a big role in helping MedicAlert move into e-health and advance patient safety,” said Shreve. “Before we implemented the StoneGate products, members had few options for updating their personal and medical records. Now our users have secure, reliable online access that allows them to update and also share their records with healthcare providers in non-emergency settings.”

Best-of-breed network infrastructure for e-health initiatives

MedicAlert chose StoneGate for its advanced redundancy, clustering and security features in a comprehensive platform that could easily scale along with the organization. This was an important discovery for MedicAlert during the product evaluation process, as Stonesoft provided the organization with the technology flexibility to continue enhancing its member and e-health services.

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Michael Shreve – Director of Systems and Supply Chain – Canadian MedicAlert

MedicAlert challenges

- Needed to ensure continuous, seamless online access for its member portal and electronic health record
- Limited IT budget available to deploy a multi-homing solution
- Needed robust technology support for new Web-based infrastructure
- Network infrastructure for the new project needed to be as redundant as possible

Results with Stonesoft

- Continuous network uptime and seamless failover for multiple ISPs
- Scalable network security with centralized platform for Firewall/VPN and IPS
- Best-of-breed network security infrastructure for new e-health initiatives
- Increased ROI, leaving more resources available for new IT projects

About the Canadian MedicAlert Foundation

Operating nationally, MedicAlert is a member-based registered charity with more than one million Canadian members. The Canadian MedicAlert Foundation has been the provider of emergency medical information services in Canada since 1961. The Foundation's services include electronic health records, a state-of-the-art secure database, a 24-hour emergency hotline and customized identification products that protect persons with chronic medical conditions or special medical needs. The foundation's web site can be accessed at www.medicalert.ca.

About Stonesoft

Stonesoft Corporation (OMX: SFT1V) is an innovative provider of integrated network security solutions to secure the information flow of distributed organizations. Stonesoft customers include organizations with growing needs requiring advanced network security and always-on 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 centrally managed system in physical and virtual environments. The key benefits of StoneGate Secure Connectivity Solution include low TCO, excellent price-performance ratio and high ROI. The virtual StoneGate solution protects the network and ensures business continuity in both virtual and physical network environments.

StoneGate Management Center provides centralized management for StoneGate Firewall with VPN, IPS and SSL VPN. StoneGate Firewall and IPS work together to provide intelligent defense throughout the organizational 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.

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