Customer Case Study: Operation Smile

Location: Virginia Beach, VA

Industry: Non-Profit

Customer Overview:
Operation Smile is an international medical charity that has provided hundreds of thousands of free surgeries for children and young adults in developing countries who are born with cleft lip, cleft palate or other facial deformities. It is one of the oldest and largest volunteer-based organizations dedicated to improving the health and lives of children worldwide through access to surgical care. Founded in 1982, Operation Smile has extended its global reach to more than 60 countries through its network of credentialed surgeons, pediatricians, doctors, nurses, and student volunteers.

The Challenge:
Christopher Ackerman is the Application System Analyst for Operation Smile responsible for reviewing new solutions and ensuring they meet the organization’s requirements.

The Operation Smile IT team manages and secures the largest database of patient data in the world, across 60 countries. According to Ackerman, Operation Smile “houses electronic medical records in every country where we operate.” The main U.S. database is in Microsoft Azure. They also maintain databases in countries around the world using Microsoft Azure. “We leverage the global Azure data center network to meet legal requirements for patient data,” Ackerman added. “The plan is to use Azure where available.”

The charity supports both clinics and missions. They manage data on premise at brick and mortar locations and Azure in countries where they do not have a physical location. Operation Smile then brings anonymized data from all locations and the cloud to a central database in Azure for analysis to make smarter choices on how to deploy surgical teams for missions and look for trends in healthcare needs.

The team was looking for a way to secure all of the patient data from its network of on premise and Azure databases around the world. According to Ackerman, “medicinal data is a highly valuable target for hackers. In the past 12 months a number of charities and non-profits have been targeted by hackers. Terrorists have also tried to hack medical data and hold it for ransom. We are trying to stay ahead of that.”

Solution:
Operation Smile originally deployed ThreatSTOP’s IP Firewall at its headquarters to block both inbound attacks and prevent outbound communications with threat actors. “When we began using the product on premise, we immediately saw what was hitting our firewall on a regular basis. Definitely a success story for us,” said Ackerman.

To secure electronic medical records in Azure, Operation Smile is using ThreatSTOP’s DNS Firewall. DNS Firewall protects cloud workloads by automatically delivering continuous threat intelligence to Azure DNS servers based on user-defined policies to prevent data theft and corruption by stopping malware from “phoning home” to threat actors.

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Adding DNS Firewall to their security platform was an easy choice. Since the team was already using ThreatSTOP on premise, it made sense to continue using ThreatSTOP for Azure in the cloud. This allowed Operation Smile to keep the same security policies across on premise and cloud databases. “Azure has become an extension of our on premise datacenter. We leverage the compute power on the cloud. The ability to manage and protect both on premise and Azure with ThreatSTOP is beneficial and crucial for what we do.”

According to Ackerman, “Working with ThreatSTOP really makes sense for us from a business standpoint. We have a relatively small IT team for an organization of our size. With ThreatSTOP, we can stay ahead of the hackers.”

About ThreatSTOP:
ThreatSTOP is a SaaS company that develops cloud-based, automated threat intel and policy solutions for corporate network ecosystems. To request a demo or speak with a salesperson, please contact sales@threatstop.com or call 760 542 1550. Visit www.threatstop.com for more information.