

Case Study:

Torrance Memorial Medical Center



Torrance Memorial Medical Center Gains Visibility into Cloud Services Usage with Trace3 and Skyhigh Networks



BENEFITS

- Able to benefit immediately from emerging technologies
- Visibility into network traffic to/from cloud services
- Enhanced security and reporting with next-generation firewalls
- Better positioned to meet new compliance requirements
- Improved dialog with employees around security policies

KEEPING L.A. HEALTHY FOR NEARLY 90 YEARS

The first hospital in the Los Angeles South Bay region, Torrance Memorial Medical Center (Torrance Memorial) has served the South Bay, Peninsula, and Harbor communities since 1925. With 400 beds and one of just three burn centers in Los Angeles County, the locally governed, non-profit institution has grown from a small local hospital to a regional medical center.

The hospital takes a proactive approach to security to guard against data breaches and ensure that information systems and networks are available. “These days, with the rise of cloud services and proliferation of mobile devices, there are many ways that an organization may be breached,” says Todd Felker, Infrastructure and Security Architect at Torrance Memorial. “We’ve restructured our team recently to enhance our security architectures so we can remain in compliance with new regulations, such as the Omnibus Rule that modifies HIPAA to tighten rules around protected health information (PHI).”

TECHNICAL CHALLENGE

Felker wanted more visibility into the traffic flowing through the hospital’s network—especially cloud-based, consumer-targeted applications that employees might be using. He related this challenge to Chad Cardenas, Vice President of Business Development focused on New Technology Integration (NTI) at Trace3, an Irvine, California-based IT solutions provider and systems integrator.

“I keep in regular touch with Trace3 because they help me stay abreast of new developments and emerging technologies that can solve business problems,” says Felker. “I do my best to stay on top

By relying on Trace3 for new technology recommendations, Torrance Memorial Medical Center increased visibility into usage of cloud services and is prepared for tightening HIPAA regulations.

of trends, but technology is evolving at such a rapid pace that I depend on Trace3’s NTI practice to keep me updated on significant shifts.”

SOLUTION

Trace3 recommended a next-generation firewall solution from Palo Alto Networks to provide packet inspection, reporting, URL filtering, and malware protection. “Palo Alto Networks was a game changer and a business enabler,” says Felker. “It allowed us to get rid of six servers we had dedicated to our previous URL filtering solution and reclaim three-quarters of an FTE’s time that was previously spent managing those servers.”

To provide visibility into usage of cloud services, Trace3 recommended a solution from Skyhigh

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Networks, a startup company that was in stealth mode at the time. “I never would have known about Skyhigh—or at least not until much, much later—if it hadn’t been for Trace3,” says Felker.

Torrance Memorial began using the cloud discovery feature of Skyhigh to identify what cloud services were being used throughout the organization and to monitor usage over time. The hospital conducted an initial proof of concept before Skyhigh was even out of stealth mode, which was eye opening.

“We uploaded data from our Palo Alto Networks firewalls into Skyhigh, and I immediately saw that there were many cloud services and applications being used in the organization,” says Felker. “Employees were using Web photo-sharing services such as Flickr, PhotoBucket, and Panoramio. I thought we might find 20 or 30 services, but we found a couple hundred.”

With Skyhigh, Torrance Memorial can tell who on the network is using a particular service, what data is flowing out, as well as what the risk is—if any. “Some cloud services are more secure than others, and

we want to be able to benefit from the cloud for legitimate business reasons as appropriate,” says Felker. “But it’s very hard to classify these services and keep up with new offerings. Skyhigh is able to accurately categorize every application and cloud service out there, and give us more than two dozen ratings to assess risk levels.”

After identifying the cloud services in use at Torrance Memorial, Skyhigh provided a risk assessment to help the hospital understand which services it should allow or support. Certain cloud services can be blocked, or the use of encryption can be enforced. Skyhigh’s threat assessments will help Felker work with hospital committees and users to create new policies that prohibit the use of some services—and provide a secure alternative.

“In most cases, users aren’t trying to be malicious; they are just trying to get work done, and they may be unknowingly circumventing our processes in doing so,” says Felker. “Now we can reach out to users, find out what they’re doing, and provide them with a secure service to meet that business need. That dialog cannot occur until you have a solution like Skyhigh in place.”

WHY TRACE3?

Torrance Memorial will continue to rely on Trace3 for technology recommendations that can help it stay secure and compliant in the rapidly changing world of healthcare IT. Trace3’s continual focus on market research and identifying new technologies that are appropriate for Torrance Memorial is helping the hospital react faster and make more informed choices.

“We don’t have time to stay on top of everything that’s going on in the IT industry,” says Felker. “Trace3 understands our needs and has brought us two very complementary solutions that will help us secure our network at the highest level and meet regulatory requirements. We’ll be able to benefit from cloud services while keeping our environment secure.”