

Advanced cybersecurity yields efficiency gains for W&W Informatik

German financial services provider improves performance of virtualized servers, increases infrastructure ROI, and achieves reliable protection against advanced threats



THE CHALLENGE

Sometimes, a chance meeting can yield unexpectedly positive outcomes. That's what happened when an employee from W&W Informatik GmbH (W&W IT), the central IT provider for global financial services conglomerate Wüstenrot & Württembergische Group (W&W), wandered into a Bitdefender booth at a VMworld trade show. W&W's server team had been struggling with their current antimalware solution, which caused performance issues and organizational challenges for its fast-growing virtualized server environment.

W&W IT Server Team was on the hunt for a new cybersecurity solution that would eliminate the security performance penalty while staying protected. The goal was to find a new vendor to establish a multilayer concept of antimalware protection. The current antimalware solution was used for both clients and servers and was managed by the client team.

Soon after VMworld, W&W IT conducted proofs of concept with Bitdefender and two competing solutions. Ultimately, W&W IT replaced their current solution with Bitdefender GravityZone Enterprise Security for its virtualized server infrastructure.

Björn Beigl, Systems Engineer, W&W Informatik GmbH, says, "We chose GravityZone because the solution is almost completely agentless and is designed for virtualized environments. That meant the performance impact would be minimal. It also was more cost-effective than other solutions with CPU-based licensing while delivering advanced security features and easy manageability from the central console."

THE SOLUTION

At W&W, Bitdefender GravityZone Enterprise Security protects 2,700 Microsoft Windows and Red Hat Enterprise Linux servers virtualized with VMware vSphere, along with 40 physical Microsoft Windows Servers. W&W's GravityZone suite includes Security for Virtualized Environments, Security for Endpoints Physical Servers all centrally managed from GravityZone Control Center.

Application environments running on virtual machines (VMs) protected by GravityZone



W&W Informatik GmbH

The Wüstenrot & Württembergische Group was formed in 1999 from the merger of the two long-established companies Wüstenrot and Württembergische. Today, it develops and sells the four building blocks of modern provision: financial security, property investment, risk protection and private wealth management.

Industry

Financial Services

Headquarters

Stuttgart, Ludwigsburg, Germany

Employees

13,000 (IT staff, 900)

Results

- Faster application performance
- Increased virtualization density per host
- Easier, more cost-effective scaling of virtual infrastructure
- 100% protection against cybersecurity threats

include Citrix XenServer, Docker, Microsoft Active Directory, Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft SQL Server, MongoDB, Oracle, SimCorp Dimension and FIS Prophet, among others.

W&W IT has been pleased with Bitdefender Premium Support and the new customer support portal.

“Bitdefender’s new customer portal is very cool,” says Beigl. “It’s easy to initiate a support request, exchange emails or look up a past issue. We also like that we can view a recap after everything is solved.”

THE RESULTS

With GravityZone, Beigl reports that applications operate more smoothly and rapidly due to decreased CPU loads.

Beigl recalls, “With our previous antimalware solution protecting our VMs, there was such a performance hit during scanning. We sometimes had to restart applications during scanning to get them running again. Additionally, there was a lot of disk space used to store all the patterns. Those problems disappeared with GravityZone and its nearly agentless environment.”

Bitdefender’s CPU-based licensing model also has increased data center efficiency. Beigl explains: “We’re fluctuating between 2,300 and 2,700 VMs. With Bitdefender CPU licensing, we don’t have to buy new VM licenses every time we add VMs to the host. It saves us both time and money.”

Since deployment five years ago, GravityZone has delivered 100 percent protection against any ransomware or other attacks targeting the virtualized environment at W&W Group. Beigl credits GravityZone’s multiple layers of security, including ransomware protection, anti-exploit, network sandbox, and other capabilities, with successful blocking of threats.

Another advantage is automating customized workflows using the GravityZone application programming interface (API). For example, one automated workflow customized by W&W IT directs GravityZone to disable scanning temporarily during installation of certain applications. Another workflow automatically records any changes or approvals authorized by the IT team, which assists with proving compliance for regulatory audits.

Beigl reflects, “Bitdefender protects our virtual environment without imposing a security tax on our infrastructure. With Bitdefender, we materially improved the ROI on our hardware investment and boosted the satisfaction of our end-users with application performance. With centralized administration and excellent professional support, our IT operators have drastically reduced the amount of time they spend managing security. They now can focus on strategic projects and customers.”

In addition to the positive experience with GravityZone, Beigl appreciates his relationship with Bitdefender.

“We’ve had the opportunity to test some of Bitdefender’s latest features before they are released. These tests help us learn a lot and gain new insights for our own environment. They also give us visibility into Bitdefender’s impressive roadmap to continue pushing the edge for improvements in cybersecurity.”

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Bitdefender Footprint

- GravityZone Enterprise Security
- GravityZone On-Premises Sandbox

IT Environment

- Citrix XenServer
- Microsoft Active Directory
- Microsoft Exchange
- Microsoft SQL Server
- Oracle
- VMware vSphere

Operating Systems

- Red Hat Enterprise Linux
- Microsoft Windows