

CASE STUDY

SightLife is a global health organization with a simple but powerful goal – to eliminate corneal blindness throughout the world. Working with Sophos partner TurnPoint Technology, SightLife has deployed Sophos UTM and Sophos RED to provide enterprise-class firewall and VPN security for an ever-growing global operation.



Partner-at-a-Glance
TurnPoint Technology



Customer-at-a-Glance
SightLife

Industry
Non-Profit

Sophos Solutions
Sophos UTM
Sophos RED





SightLife is the only non-profit global health organization solely focused on eliminating corneal blindness in the U.S. and around the world through excellence in eye banking, innovation, and global capacity building. This global health organization pushes beyond the status quo seeking collaboration and strong partnerships with surgeons, healthcare facilities, and other eye banks for systemic change. By restoring sight, SightLife helps millions unlock life's possibilities by going back to work or back to school, and gaining back independence to help create stronger communities worldwide. Together with partners in dozens of countries, SightLife restores sight in more than 50 men, women, and children every day – working towards a day when no one will have to wait for a corneal transplant regardless of where they are in the world.

“To protect patient privacy it's critical that we ensure high-security connections with all of our branches and partners, and the Sophos RED devices give us that peace of mind.”

VINCENT BRIERE
Director of IT
SightLife

Business Challenge

Founded in 1969 in Seattle, SightLife began expanding its services beyond the U.S. in 2004. “Over the past decade, we've focused on the global problem of corneal blindness, a treatable condition, and on building a scalable model for our organization that can serve people in developing countries,” notes Vincent Briere, director of IT, SightLife. “It means empowering local health officials and surgeons as well as healthcare professionals with the resources they need to treat corneal blindness in their own communities.”

SightLife recruited Briere in 2014 in order to build a secure and flexible IT infrastructure for supporting this global model, which the organization is continuing to replicate throughout the world. Most recently, Briere and his IT team have been working to migrate the infrastructure to a new data center and an all-new network topology. One aspect of this project is deployment of the Microsoft Skype for Business (also known as Microsoft Lync) instant messaging, video conferencing, and online meeting solution to connect all SightLife locations.

Another important component of the project is an upgrade of the SightLife firewall security system. “Previously, we were relying on very complex Cisco firewall gear, which required us to call in outside expertise for troubleshooting and maintenance,” Briere explains. “We needed a cost-effective solution that would be easy for our team to administer, while at the same time providing robust, enterprise-scale firewall protection and performance.”

"We are passionate about designing cutting-edge enterprise-grade infrastructure, and our clients consider us true partners in their growth and success."

AARON MARKS
President & CTO
TurnPoint Technology

Technology Solution

To address its firewall and VPN security requirements, SightLife turned to TurnPoint Technology. Founded in 2000, TurnPoint Technology provides IT consulting, managed services, and cloud services with a loyal and growing client base of small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs) ranging from 50 to 300 employees. TurnPoint Technology's center of expertise is designing private cloud solutions that leverage Microsoft technologies, such as Windows servers, SQL Server databases, and Microsoft Skype for Business and, in turn, securing those solutions accordingly. To provide firewall security, this consulting firm has been working with Sophos UTM almost since its founding.

Before choosing Sophos UTM, SightLife worked with TurnPoint to evaluate a range of firewall vendors including SonicWALL, WatchGuard, and Cisco's latest solution. "Sophos UTM firewalls and routers were the logical choice for SightLife because the Sophos network protection license offers universal functionality that is only available through separate licenses with competitors' solutions," explains TurnPoint Technology CEO and founder Aaron Marks. "And the solution is so straightforward that the SightLife managers were able to utilize the Sophos system immediately and start being productive."

After a detailed planning process to understand SightLife's business challenges, the TurnPoint Technology team was able to design a Sophos UTM configuration that identified all network requirements and firewall rules the organization would need for the next six months. "Because Sophos is so easy to work with, we were able to lay out and explain their network topology proactively and visually, in a manner that instantly conveyed the longer-term benefits," Marks comments.

Sophos UTM provides firewall protection for the entire global SightLife organization. To date, TurnPoint Technology has installed Sophos UTM appliances in high availability mode in four SightLife offices, with deployments planned for the remaining offices in the coming months. TurnPoint Technology is also working to deploy Sophos RED (Remote Ethernet Device) units to create secure VPN tunnels linking each remote site to the SightLife corporate network.

High Performance With Less Complexity

A key aspect of Briere's role is to build an IT team that can support SightLife's rapidly growing global organization well into the future. "We have quadrupled our team in just a year," he relates. "As we work to build an enterprise-level IT operation, it's important that new personnel can manage the

technologies we've adopted with little or no learning curve. That's a big advantage of the Sophos UTM devices – they're extremely easy for our users to learn, understand, and manage." Briere gave the example of a new systems engineer who joined the team with little or no familiarity with Sophos. "He was able to hit the ground running with the Sophos UTM and begin contributing right away on several projects."

Briere also has praise for the Sophos RED devices that create VPN connectivity with each SightLife branch office as well as key partners such as medical professionals. "To protect patient privacy it's critical that we ensure high-security connections with all of our branches and partners, and the Sophos RED devices give us that peace of mind," he notes. "And like the Sophos UTM devices, the REDs are extremely effortless to set up, configure, and maintain – as opposed to the previous solution that required us to bring in a consultant and make changes at the code level every time we needed to create a new VPN tunnel."

Marks adds that TurnPoint is able to create a VPN tunnel using Sophos RED in a tenth of the time required by competing solutions. "We can get a tunnel up and running in 30 seconds to a minute, and then while we're waiting for the business partner on the other end to get it working, we can focus on other priorities," Marks comments. "With Sophos, you can stay completely ahead of the network security game. Sophos is so easy that it's hard to make mistakes."

Superior Technology for Microsoft Deployments

The SightLife projects, as well as other client engagements, showcase the unique capabilities of Sophos UTM that smooth TurnPoint Technology's deployments of Microsoft-based IT solutions. In particular, Microsoft Skype for Business has complex firewall and router requirements that are difficult or impossible to meet with other UTM solutions. "With Sophos, it's very easy to replicate Skype for Business capabilities among multiple deployments. Sophos UTM's excellent visual representation of the firewall access control list makes it really easy to ensure that the solution is configured for maximum security," Marks says.

He adds that the quality-of-service (QoS) controls within Sophos UTM make it easy to provide optimal QoS for Skype for Business transactions. "Sophos UTM is able to work with all of the QoS tagging from the Skype for Business servers and maintain the tags as data traverses the UTM router," he describes. "This works much better than any other UTM product we've ever worked with, and it's critical since dropping packets is absolutely unacceptable in real-time network communications."

A Winning Three-Way Partnership

Although TurnPoint Technology represents many types of SMBs, a common thread running through the company's client base is non-profits and other organizations that are working to solve pressing social and environmental problems. "That's why TurnPoint was a perfect fit for us," Briere remarks. "They truly understand the delicate balance we have to maintain, as a growing global health organization, to deliver enterprise-level functionality in the most cost-effective manner possible."

Marks adds, "We are passionate about designing cutting-edge enterprise-grade infrastructure, and our clients consider us true partners in their growth and success. What sets us apart from our competitors is our focus on clients' big-picture challenges. Rather than offering one-size-fits-all packages, we take the time to truly understand clients' short- and long-term business goals. Then we architect holistic solutions that might go beyond the client's initial stated goal but address a more comprehensive range of challenges both now and into the future."

"In TurnPoint, we've found the consulting partner to help us accomplish the major initiatives we're working on, such as creating a model for connectivity and security that can be replicated each time we add a new branch office," Briere concludes. "We appreciate that TurnPoint is willing to challenge the status-quo mindset of using enterprise-grade hardware and help us consider other solutions, such as Sophos, that give us enterprise functionality in an easy-to-maintain and more cost-effective package. TurnPoint Technology has become an important ally in our efforts to build a world-class IT infrastructure."

Likewise, TurnPoint Technology values its ongoing partnership with Sophos because the technology streamlines client projects and helps the company deliver on its commitment to provide holistic solutions that address big-picture challenges. "When we put other vendors' products in front of our clients, they always choose Sophos. In the 12 years of our partnership, we have never had a bad client experience or a security breach with Sophos UTM," Marks notes. "We consider our partnership with Sophos to be fundamental to our business, and we know we can count on the Sophos team to provide the support we need to ensure our own and our clients' success."

Conclusion

With Sophos UTM as the firewall security anchor, TurnPoint Technology has been able to deliver a new data center and network configuration that will serve SightLife well as the company continues to expand its services worldwide. Sophos UTM not only provides expanded functionality, but does it in a way that is faster and easier for SightLife technicians to manage without the need to call in outside experts. Moving forward, SightLife has adopted Sophos UTM for the next phase of its IT build-out: creation of a replicated data center in California to support disaster recovery and business continuity.

"Sophos UTM not only gives us a more fundamental and comprehensive view of our security infrastructure, but its ease of management means my team can focus on the most strategic projects," Briere comments. "As a non-profit, we want to funnel our resources into our mission of ending corneal blindness, which means not having to pay an outside engineer for day-to-day system management tasks. With Sophos solutions, we're able to streamline our operation and empower our internal team to drive the mission of our organization."

Start your free trial of
Sophos UTM today.

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