

Mahanagar Gas Limited

Protecting the network that protects the environment

Situation

Mahanagar Gas Ltd (MGL) was incorporated from a joint venture between the Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL), the BG Group UK (formerly British Gas), and the Government of Maharashtra. The company was formed as part of initiatives to reduce the amount of pollutants in Mumbai, India, by providing clean, efficient and affordable natural gas as an alternative fuel.

Mahanagar Gas Ltd supplies Piped Natural Gas (PNG) directly to over 600,000 homes and 500 commercial establishments and industries in Mumbai. The company also operates a network of 100 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) filling stations that provide fuel for over 50,000 taxis, about 100,000 auto-rickshaws, and hundreds of buses. Natural gas is a clean burning fuel that produces significantly fewer harmful emissions compared to reformulated gasoline or diesel.

The company was formed in 1995 in Chembur, a suburb of Mumbai, and has since seen phenomenal growth into a gas utility giant reaching all areas of Mumbai. The company has converted the public to a preference for natural gas in homes, powering cooking stoves and air conditioners. The people of Mumbai have benefited in other ways as well, as pollutant emissions in the city have been reduced by almost 600 metric tons today.

Mahanagar Gas Ltd's corporate network has similarly grown in size and sophistication since 1995. The company, headquartered in Bandra Kurla complex in a Mumbai suburb is connected to a nearby billing and call center and the emergency control room via a 2 Mbps leased line. Five distribution offices around the city and two satellite offices each have 128 Kbps dedicated connections to the headquarters. The company maintains nearly 15 servers and more than 200 workstations, and runs applications for inventory management, workflow and an employee intranet. Numerous technical libraries are hosted on the servers and the company depends on a mission critical database on Oracle 9i. The company also had a 128 Kbps broadband connection to the Internet.

Rapid growth in the company has also introduced some unique challenges for the company's IT department: With the recent proliferation of network threats from viruses, Trojans, spam and intrusion techniques, the IT staff soon found themselves frenetically plugging holes and putting out fires.

"Unsecured access to the Internet resulted in security mayhem in our organization with a plethora of virii, spyware and other malware creating dangerous bottlenecks in our network and bringing day to day activities in our enterprise to a grinding halt," recalls Hemant Joshi, Deputy Manager (IT) for Mahanagar Gas Ltd.



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*- Hemant Joshi,
Deputy Manager (IT)*

Fortinet Products in Use:
FortiGate-300

Industry: Utilities

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With a planned Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project implementation in the pipeline, the company recognized that security had become a top priority item and decided to conduct an IT Security Audit to identify loopholes and vulnerabilities in the network.

Solution

The security audit defined a list of features that Mahanagar Gas Ltd. needed in a security solution, and these included comprehensive firewalling, antivirus functionality for detecting and destroying viruses, Trojans and other threats at the gateway between the corporate network and the Internet, and tracking bandwidth utilization.

"The organization was reeling under constant virus attacks. This kind of situation restricted MGL from letting its remote users access the corporate network, or even, for that matter, mails." Prashant Mudbidri, Director of Logix Consultancy Group Pvt. Ltd, said. The Logix Consultancy Group Pvt. Ltd is a reseller of Fortinet products, who assisted Mahanagar Gas Ltd in evaluating security solutions. "Fortinet's product functionalities mapped to the audit report's suggestions."

"We wanted a solution that conformed to the suggestions in the IT Security Audit report. We zeroed in on Fortinet, because, besides offering all the features that we needed, they had achieved all 4 ICSA certifications, and had an Intrusion Prevention System (IPS) feature. Fortinet provided us with a FortiGate-300 for testing for a couple of days, and we were impressed with how easy it was to install, its outstanding wire-line performance and robust security features," explained Mr. Joshi. "All broadband traffic now filters through the Fortinet firewall. We have also enabled NAT (Network Address Translation) for our mail and Citrix servers."

Mahanagar Gas Ltd purchased and deployed one unit of the FortiGate-300 antivirus firewall platform in mid-2004. The implementation was smooth, with minimum difficulties, and it now secures 225 users in all offices for email and 25 users in headquarters for Internet access.

Success

Mahanagar Gas Ltd. has seen a dramatic reduction in the number of virus attacks and other network intrusion incidents since the deployment, and network performance and user experience has improved significantly. "This has phenomenally improved the performance of our Internet connection," said Mr. Joshi.

With security now in place, the imminent rollout of the ERP suite can continue and plans have already been made to deploy a mail server in-house. The company now has plans to expand the use of Fortinet products as its network expands.

"We haven't yet used the ability to create DMZs or the feature for traffic-shaping, and when the mail server is installed, we will need the antispam feature," says Mr. Joshi, "we will also need to provide access to the Internet for our Kalina office. Fortinet is a natural choice. We are a very satisfied customer."

The FortiGate-300 antivirus firewall platform provides complete real-time network protection through a combination of network-based antivirus, web and email content filtering, firewall, VPN, dynamic intrusion detection and prevention, traffic shaping, and anti-spam. All FortiGate-series firewalls eliminate viruses, worms, and grayware/spyware from email, file transfer, and real-time Web traffic without degrading network performance, through its innovative hardware-accelerated ASIC-based architecture.

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