

FORTINET

Client: South Indian Bank

Project: To deliver secure services without having to worry about growth or obsolescence

Scalable Security. South Indian Bank is one of the leading scheduled commercial banks in India with a strong focus on technology and service. It has presence in 23 states and union territories of India. The bank has 489 branches, 26 extension counters and 204 ATMs across the country.

Business challenge. The bank was working in a decentralized manner, with in-house standalone applications running in various branches. On the advice of its IT consultant, the bank decided to move to the core banking solution from Infosys, Finacle. This was done in 2001. With this came the option to deliver Internet banking services to the customers. This was the only service where the bank's systems had to be accessed from the outside. This was a huge security concern for the bank. In 2002, the bank opted to go for the best of breed applications for its various levels of security. The application proxy, IDS (intrusion detection system) and gateway antivirus were from Symantec. However, when

Symantec announced end-of-life for some of its products, the bank opted to go with a Unified Threat Management solution as the technology had matured. The key concern during evaluation was that management of different products, even from the same vendor, was not without issues. "So the idea of using a single box was accepted to enable the comfort of deployment, ease of operation and better management for the bank," says Sreekumar Chengath, chief manager-Networks & IS Security.

The bank evaluated available UTM solutions. "The market feedback on the Fortinet solution was very good. Fortinet is a pioneer in the UTM solutions space. That is why we went with Fortinet," says Sreekumar. He also adds that Fortinet's products have a clear roadmap, which most other rivals do not have. Another criterion for selecting Fortinet was expandability and enhancement options available in the solution. It has boxes built for small organizations, enterprises, carriers and large organizations. "With enterprise solutions, we get a lot of expandability. We do not have to worry about scaling up for the next 5-7 years", says Sreekumar.

Solution. The bank opted for two

boxes of FortiGate TM-800 deployed in redundancy mode and the FortiAnalyzer™ which monitors the boxes setup as a cluster in active-passive mode. The solution basically has firewall, anti-spam, anti-virus and intrusion prevention system modules. The deployment was done in October 2007. The UTM solution is deployed in the bank's data center in Kochi. It controls all the branches and 2700 users across the country.

Benefits. "The benefit we immediately saw after the deployment was that of better spam control," Sreekumar says. "We used to get 150-200 spam mails per day, now that has reduced to less than 10!" he adds. Deploying the Fortinet solution also has opened up a secure way of providing PCs at each branch office. Currently the bank has provided separate Internet connected PCs in each bank, so it is not part of the bank's closed user group. A pilot is on to ensure that using the Fortinet firewall, it will be safe to provide PCs with Internet access as part of the bank's network without needing a dedicated proxy. This will ensure that parallel infrastructure is not required at each branch.