

Milton Keynes General NHS Trust

HEALTHCARE

The hospital trust that provides acute and primary care in Milton Keynes is a long-term Sophos user, and takes pride in ensuring its computers are protected from all forms of malware and unwanted applications. Adware was having a significant impact on the productivity of users and IT staff, so the trust took the opportunity to upgrade its protection to the latest version of Sophos Anti-Virus®. The problem has been eliminated almost overnight.



Business challenge

Milton Keynes General Hospital was purpose built for the growing city of Milton Keynes and has been serving the needs of a rapidly expanding population since it opened in 1984. It is operated by an NHS Trust and is currently applying for Foundation Trust status. The hospital provides 460 beds for acute patients and continues to add new capacity, including 60 beds in a £12 million day treatment centre which opened in 2005. A new £2 million angiography unit opened in May 2006 to support the work of the cardiac team at the hospital.

Although the computers at Milton Keynes General have been protected by Sophos Anti-Virus since 1998, systems engineer Nick Southern needs to ensure that the hospital keeps systems up to date with the latest improvements in security, functionality and ease of use. His users have experienced increasing problems with adware which, in the case of the Yahoo! toolbar, interrupted internet access and involved the IT team in unnecessary visits to individual desktops. Southern has used a range of commercial tools to remove adware and other

Key facts

Organisation

Milton Keynes General NHS Trust

Location

Milton Keynes, UK

No of desktops

3000+

No of servers

45

Solutions

Sophos Anti-Virus for Windows

“Sophos Anti-Virus is one of the best IT investments the hospital has made. It gets better and better, and the upgrade to version 6 was one of the smoothest rollouts we’ve had.”

*Nick Southern, Systems Engineer,
Milton Keynes General NHS Trust*

potentially unwanted applications (PUAs) with varying degrees of success, so he was keen to see how the upgrade to version 6 of Sophos Anti-Virus would help. The hospital was coming to the end of a substantial programme of system upgrades, including rolling out Windows® XP for a new patient administration system, and it was important that the upgrade could be deployed with the minimum of disruption.

Technology solution

Sophos Anti-Virus provides complex networks with integrated protection from known and unknown malware and threats to productivity – such as adware – across all servers, desktops and laptops. Having evaluated other anti-virus solutions periodically, and been less than completely satisfied with specific tools available for removing adware, Nick Southern was confident that the new version of Sophos Anti-Virus would meet his needs. “It just gets better with each new release – functionality, ease of use, and deployment are all improved”, he says. “It detects and removes the adware, reinstates web access and sends me an email confirming the actions. It also gives us the flexibility to authorise non-business applications if we need to, but currently we are happy to block all PUAs. We now have Sophos Anti-Virus running on 45 servers and 1500 desktops in the hospital, following one of the smoothest rollouts I can remember.”

Sophos Enterprise Console™ allows centralised deployment and updating of Sophos Anti-Virus in a matter of minutes, as well as network-wide configuration, monitoring and management. Protection of around a dozen roaming laptops is also updated automatically whenever they log on to the hospital's VPN (virtual private network). Alternatively, they can connect directly to a dedicated Sophos website to update.



Milton Keynes General's new £12 million day treatment centre

According to Nick Southern, “Smart Views in Enterprise Console enables us to check instantly on the status of all our PCs – we usually do this every two or three days to make sure they have the latest protection.” He continues, “We have configured our systems for speed, so Sophos Anti-Virus is set to scan when writing files to servers and reading from desktops, ensuring that files are not scanned twice. The ActivePolicies™ feature in Sophos Anti-Virus also enables us to set pragmatic group-wide policies – for instance, we make sure that low-risk files such as X-ray images are excluded from scanning, so that urgent patient diagnoses are not impeded in any way.”

Business results

Confidence in the capabilities of Sophos Anti-Virus was already high at Milton Keynes General. As Nick Southern explains, “When we first installed the software all those years ago, it sorted out so many of our PCs almost overnight – they ran faster and we were spared a lot of legwork. I consider it to be one of the best IT investments the hospital has made.” In common with all healthcare organisations, the hospital needs to safeguard the integrity of patient records. Consequently, every computer in the organisation is scanned out of hours to ensure continued protection from malware, including spyware that could steal confidential data.

With regards to the productivity benefits of the latest version of Sophos Anti-Virus, Southern claims, “In the past we needed to visit 10 to 15 computers a month to sort out problems, but now a month can pass when we are not called out at all. The reduction in manual attendance is due in large part to the handling of unwanted applications – Sophos just takes care of them.”

Milton Keynes General has benefited from Sophos's preferential pricing for the healthcare sector, and taken the opportunity to extend licensing to its associated Primary Care Trust. A total of more than 3000 users are now protected by Sophos Anti-Virus. The hospital is also considering evaluating the Sophos Email Security Appliance for gateway protection. Summing up the reasons for choosing to upgrade Sophos Anti-Virus, Nick Southern says, “There simply isn't much out there that will beat Sophos.”

To find out how Sophos products can help protect your organisation, visit www.sophos.com/products