



Smile: Growing Dental Firm Saves Big

A Case Study in Network Security

“WatchGuard not only provides the security functions that we need for HIPAA and other regulations that are tied to us, but it lets us secure each of our 20 dental offices, each performing multiple tasks.” **Scott Frankel, Director of Technology, Neibauer Dental Care.**

BACKGROUND

Thanks to a commitment to build extraordinary patient-oriented facilities that embrace a gentle care philosophy, Neibauer Dental Care is expanding rapidly. To serve patients across multiple locations in Maryland and Virginia, the company required a new approach to networking as well. They turned to Ntiva Technologies, a network services and consultancy firm. Ntiva showed them how a VPN solution built around WatchGuard devices could protect patient privacy, add layers of redundancy to protect their business, centralize access to patient records – and save more than a million dollars in just one year.

CHALLENGE

Beginning with one office in 2005, Neibauer Dental has expanded to approximately 20 locations along a continuous and steady growth track. “Each office had its own practice management system, storage of X-rays and patient records,” explains Director of Technology Scott Frankel. But when the company opened its fifteenth location, it had reached the point where it needed to centralize. “When a patient moved from one office to another, we had to move the patient records by faxing, emailing or mailing them. That took a considerable amount of time. And last year alone, we saw over 27,000 new patients.

We transfer digital X-rays and scanned documents through a central practice management system, so we have substantial bandwidth capacity needs,” he explains. At first, Neibauer Dental investigated

MPLS and Ethernet LAN leased lines. But across all the locations, the projected monthly cost was \$130,000 for the connections. “We were looking at the numbers,” he recalls, “and our Controller was concerned about spending such a substantial amount on connectivity.”

WATCHGUARD® SOLUTION

The vice president of a local communications consultancy recommended getting in touch with Steven Freidkin, president of Ntiva. Freidkin suggested a different approach. As he explains, “The direction we took was to find the least expensive but quickest Internet connections in each location, get two for failover, and use IPsec tunnels to tie the locations together. With WatchGuard, we could implement failover Internet, firewall each location, meet the HIPAA security requirements, and save a ton of money.”

A hardened, collocated facility which serves as the primary data center is protected by a pair of WatchGuard Firebox® X Core™ 1250e units running in a high availability configuration. The main office data center serves as the backup facility and is protected by a redundant pair of Core X750e appliances. Each dental office is protected by a WatchGuard Firebox X Edge 10e or 20e, which maintains a secure VPN connection to the collocated facility over a failover pair of Internet connections using whatever is locally available: DSL, Cable Internet, FIOS, and/or T1 lines.

BENEFITS

The overwhelming benefit of the WatchGuard solution is the annual savings of well over \$1 million for connectivity, for a solution that is robust, secure and includes a hardened data center. As Scott Frankel from Neibauer Dental says, “Our controller was very pleased with the path that was chosen.”

A Platform for Expansion

Neibauer Dental continues to grow, both in office size and in locations. Explains Frankel, “When we open a new office, we start with four operatories, which is ideal for opening. But we outfit the office for six to seven operatories. And that's a great thing about WatchGuard: When we need more capacity at an office, it's just a matter of entering an additional license key.

“We want to help as many people as we can and we do that by opening offices with convenient hours. Now we have the central data center, and with WatchGuard, we have a solid platform to use for our networking and connectivity that meets our needs and requirements. WatchGuard has definitely been able to help us grow and centralize our systems.”

Hospital-Like Operations, HIPAA-Compliant Security

“We are basically doing all the functions of a hospital. We deal with insurance, with financing, and handle patient health records in a centralized manner,” says Frankel. That means he needs to allow ubiquitous Internet access, but maintain high security. “We do a lot of the financing through Chase and some other companies, and they do all their applications online. Many of our other tasks are done online or through email as well. We also use the Internet for electronic claims for getting information to the health insurers, as well as processing and depositing checks electronically.

“WatchGuard not only provides the security functions that we need for HIPAA and other regulations that are tied to us, but it lets us secure our offices, each accessing the patient records from a central location.

“Our next step is to centralize the Internet connections going out from each branch office, so that everything goes out through the collocation center where the X1250e devices run the WatchGuard Gateway AntiVirus/IPS, WebBlocker and other security checks. That's big for me. Being able to centrally

manage everything, saves time and improves security and over-all performance of the network” says Frankel.

Easier Management, Solid Partnership

“The WatchGuard appliances basically run themselves,” says Frankel. “They haven’t just saved us money, but they saved us a lot of time managing equipment. If you go with a dedicated line, it’s always someone else’s equipment that you don’t really have any control over. You have to attach your equipment to it and there are always bottlenecks or issues.

“If it weren’t for Ntiva and WatchGuard, I’d have to hire several people to manage the different equipment and connections. Ntiva has lots of people working for them that have the knowledge for different functions. And the centralized management of the firewalls is great with the WatchGuard System Manager. It’s nice to be able to see my branch offices all there, see status, and make sure they’re up.”

“We had discussed using WatchGuard versus using Cisco, and WatchGuard just made more sense. Configuring Cisco is a pain, and it’s much easier to deal with WatchGuard and their support people. I need technology that’s not just easy to use, but easy to manage that has great support. With Ntiva and WatchGuard, I know we’re secure.”

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ABOUT WATCHGUARD

Since 1996, WatchGuard has been building award-winning unified threat management (UTM) network security solutions that combine firewall, VPN and security services to protect networks and the businesses they power. We recently launched the next generation: extensible threat management (XTM) solutions featuring reliable, all-in-one security, scaled and priced to meet the unique security needs of every enterprise. Our products are backed by 15000 partners representing WatchGuard in 120 countries. More than a half million signature red WatchGuard security appliances have already been deployed worldwide in industries including retail, education, and healthcare. WatchGuard is headquartered in Seattle, Washington, with offices throughout North America, Europe, Asia Pacific, and Latin America.

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