

GBS Success Story

Harzsparkasse counts on iQ.Suite to fight off encryption Trojans

iQ.Suite

The company

The Harzsparkasse is a public agency. Their business territory covers the administrative district of Harz in the German federal state of Sachsen-Anhalt. The Harzsparkasse is represented at 100 locations, with approximately 450 employees.

As part of the Sparkassen-Finanzgruppe (Savings Banks Financial Group), the Harzsparkasse conducts all the standard banking transactions of a full-service bank. The product range includes full lending and deposit operations, as well as other

The challenge

Especially in the financial sector, sensitive and confidential data is exchanged constantly. The Harzsparkasse naturally places immense importance on reliable and up-to-date protection for their email communication. Since the year 2000, the Sparkasse has demonstrated their confidence in GBS by depending on the comprehensive protection iQ.Suite provides for email security. Under IBM Domino, the modules Watchdog (virus and phishing protection), Wall (spam protection), Trailer (legally compliant email footer management) and Clerk (absence management) are used to fulfil a multitude of demands placed on IT today.

Due in part to the dramatic increase in the number of encryption Trojan attacks on businesses and financial institutes, the explosive topic of ransomware moved into the focus of the IT managers. Encryption Trojans aim to encrypt the data on a victim's PC, leaving the user with no possibility of accessing the data. Entire networks have been compromised this way. Attackers take advantage of the situation and demand ransom money in exchange for releasing the captive data.

financial services such as financial consulting and services related to giro (checking) accounts.

Consumer loan volume for 2015 at the Harzsparkasse was 1.2 billion euros, making the Harzsparkasse the leading loan and credit provider in the Harz district. In the same time period, the Harzsparkasse commanded customer deposits of 2 billion euros.

These dangerous extortion Trojans are generally smuggled into a company via attachments in phishing mails. By imitating a trustworthy source and a legitimate concern, attackers often succeed in luring employees to open attachments, with potentially devastating results.

In order to learn more about protection from crypto Trojans, the Harzsparkasse participated in this year's GBS Academy Workshop "From Phishing to Ransomware – Gaining control over crypto Trojans and other cyber threats". Subsequently, the IT management decided to implement GBS's solution iQ.Suite Convert and iQ.Suite Smart to defend against crypto Trojans.

"Even with regular training, we know that remaining sceptical and keeping a close eye on emails from unfamiliar sources can only help to deflect attacks to a certain degree. This is precisely why we decided to opt for GBS's excellent technical solution to block dangerous macros in Office documents", says Uwe Partsch, from IT Organisation at the Harzsparkasse.

The Solution

GBS's solution with iQ.Suite Convert and iQ.Suite Smart provides a secure and stable defence against ransomware Trojans. The installation, which only took one day, uses fingerprint technology to reliably identify Microsoft Office documents containing macros. Efficient and effective protection against crypto Trojans is assured at the Harzsparkasse with the following scenario:

- 1** First, in interplay with iQ.Suite Watchdog, incoming emails with potentially damaging, suspicious macros in Office documents, such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint are identified.
- 2** These emails are then stopped, placed in quarantine and attachments are converted to PDF format with iQ.Suite Convert.
- 3** Subsequently, the appropriate employees at Harzsparkasse receive the converted attachment as a PDF file. Malcode no longer poses a threat. Employees are notified that the original email has been placed in quarantine for security reasons and will be delivered only after successfully passing a series of virus scans.

Added Value

By integrating iQ.Suite Convert and iQ.Suite Smart, the Harzsparkasse has ensured communication security at its highest level and is protected against new types of threats from ransomware. Centralised conversion to PDF format brings with it the added benefit of prohibiting accidental or intentional file editing. And iQ.Suite Convert supports the conversion to the well recognised PDF/A format for archiving purposes as well.

Summing up

Email communication is now fully protected from cyber attacks by GBS's iQ.Suite solution at the Harzsparkasse. Innovative security technology makes it possible to identify and fight off

4 In the next step, using iQ.Suite Watchdog and updated antivirus signatures, the original email attachment is subjected to further virus scans. Over a period of four hours, the emails are repeatedly examined for malcode...six to eight times in total!

5 If the file is ultimately classified as safe, iQ.Suite Smart delivers it in its original form to the recipient.

"Implementation was quick and easy. And now we have the peace of mind that comes with knowing that this solution fulfils an important need in our security strategy", says Uwe Partsch.

Centralised, automated management means that the employees of the Harzsparkasse are not hindered in their daily work in any way. No need whatsoever for individual training and the related expenses – an important aspect when it comes to optimising productivity.

crypto Trojans. The process is fully automated, ensuring smooth and uninterrupted email communication.