

From Firewall to Cloud, Diocese of Brooklyn Enthusiastically Embraces Unified Sophos Security Across its Parishes and Schools



Customer-at-a-Glance

Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn

Industry

Religious parishes and educational institutions

Number of Users

7,000 employees

Website

<http://dioceseofbrooklyn.org>

Sophos Solutions

- Sophos Central Endpoint Advanced
- Sophos Central Server Protection Advanced
- Sophos Intercept X
- Sophos SG UTM
- Sophos Access Points
- Sophos Reflexion
- Sophos Phish Threat





The Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn is the seventh largest organization of its kind in the U.S. It serves more than 1.5 million Catholics living in Brooklyn and Queens and includes 187 parishes and approximately 90 schools. This complex, multifaceted organization turned to Sophos to unify and simplify its endpoint, firewall, and cloud security; improve system and network performance; meet compliance requirements; and provide a wider array of network services to its users.

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Gus Garcia
Security and Information Officer
Diocese of Brooklyn

Challenges

- Unreliable and inadequate email, firewall, and endpoint security products
- Disparate multi-vendor security products with security gaps and high system overhead
- Desire to expand user services, such as Wi-Fi
- Poor endpoint and server visibility across multiple locations
- Need for quick, easy root cause analysis and forensics
- Need for improved time and effort spent on fulfilling compliance requirements, particularly at audit time

Can a single vendor provide more efficient and stronger end-to-end security?

Security and Information Officer Gus Garcia coordinates all aspects of IT and security across the diocese. From his perspective, he views the IT organization as a shared services operation. Garcia is responsible for the security of every device and for providing auditors with reports to demonstrate regulatory compliance.

Garcia and his 12-person team were looking to build a multilayered, holistic security environment to defend against today's advanced threats and provide users with optimized, secure services. The organization's core multivendor solution set included MX Logic for email security, Cisco firewalls, and Symantec for endpoint protection. Garcia was continually frustrated with the limitations of these products, not to mention productivity-draining downtime and high bandwidth load.

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"Some of the security products we had required a very specific skill set and expensive resources to perform administrative tasks," articulates Garcia. "We needed something easier to configure and manage — and I was determined to introduce a more unified and streamlined approach to security."

According to Garcia, Symantec endpoint security offered inadequate protection and had to be supplemented with AVG Free Antivirus, Microsoft Security Essentials, and MalwareBytes. The IT team had little visibility into end user and threat activity, so tracing root causes was time-consuming and complex.

How do you make the switch to Sophos?

At a Diocesan Information Systems Conference about a year ago, Garcia met Joshua Heard of Data Integrity Services, a Sophos Partner. Prior to the event, Garcia had no familiarity with Sophos and was even skeptical. Heard recommended an onsite demo. Garcia agreed and challenged Heard by hacking into systems to test Sophos detection and protection capabilities. When Garcia saw that Sophos detected and blocked his hacking attempts, he became a true believer. Garcia understood the value of Sophos SG UTM and signed off immediately on six firewalls for the three administrative buildings, complemented by Sophos Professional Services. As Heard attests, the firewall rollout was seamless: "They loved the simplicity. That was a home run."

The team at Data Integrity Services spent four days thoroughly walking Garcia and his technicians through both Sophos SG UTM and Sophos Heartbeat. Garcia learned how Synchronized Security enables sharing of threat intelligence across Sophos XG Firewall and Central Endpoint Protection. Gus and his team are

proud of hitting a major milestone in implementing comprehensive security at the Diocese with their current products covering their network and endpoints. He looks forward to achieving the next milestone—a truly integrated security system—through XG Firewall and the deployment of Sophos Heartbeat, with its ability to automate threat discovery, investigation, and response. And, last, but certainly not least, Garcia values Data Integrity Services as a trusted partner.

"The Sophos firewall solution is solid as a rock. I ended up replacing the Cisco firewalls in all three of our main administration buildings. I can't say enough good things about the product," comments Garcia. "I trust Data Integrity Services because it's not about making money. It's important that as a partner, they find the solution that works for me and the entire diocese."

Can Sophos completely transform security?

In the past, the IT team had to juggle multiple products, and it often fell on Garcia's shoulders to handle the more complicated tasks. "It used to be that one product wouldn't fulfill our needs — until we moved to Sophos. Now, it's simple. All we need is Sophos. Our systems run faster, and we have excellent visibility into endpoint and network activity. I can just log into my Sophos Central account and easily see which computers are lacking up-to-date security and modify them quickly and painlessly," says Garcia.

To defend endpoints, Garcia deployed 1,000 seats of Endpoint Protection and 50 licenses of Server Protection through Sophos Central. Unlike their previous unintegrated patchwork of endpoint solutions, Sophos Central has all the functionality the organization needs in one place: the ability to check internet connections in

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real time to block known threats, out-of-the-box policy controls to minimize risk of infection from malware, and antivirus swift detection and removal of viruses.

"We're looking forward to expanding Sophos endpoint security to our user base of 7,000 employees," declares Garcia. "As for server protection, it's just as good as endpoint. It's easy for me to go to the cloud dashboard gather updates on servers that are critical to our operation and ensure that they are fully protected. We cannot afford any downtime. Best of all, with Sophos I can manage our security from anywhere — even from my native Colombia when I go on vacation to visit family."

For the diocese, email outages are never an option. Garcia deployed 2,000 licenses of Sophos Reflexion cloud-based endpoint security with its strong encryption, anti-spam, and antivirus capabilities to ensure uninterrupted communication. Once again, Data Integrity Services facilitated the implementation, which Garcia describes as "insanely simple — it was literally out-of-the-box and done."

To round out his holistic security environment, Garcia also added 1,000 seats of Sophos Intercept X, which can mitigate 24 complex exploit techniques, including today's biggest and most rampant threat — ransomware. The impact of Sophos Intercept X has already been felt.

"In the past 12 to 18 months, we have not experienced any serious incidents or outages. Intercept X is the best possible protection against ransomware and other internet threats," notes Garcia. "Now our users stay productive, and I no longer have to send my technicians out to clear up every system when something bad happens."

How do you wow executives?

Garcia and his team make good use of the aggregated end-of-year reports available in Sophos solutions and use them to promote their security strategy to the executive staff.

"Reporting helps management see that security events have been minimal since we've adopted Sophos as our vendor," notes Garcia.

Sophos provides complete transparency about all threat activity — ransomware, exploits, and compromised browsers — and clearly demonstrates IT's ability to manage them.

"Even though the executives don't necessarily see the direct impact, they need to know that we blocked over one million spam emails. This makes them aware of the importance of continuing to invest in superior security solutions like Sophos," states Garcia. "These reports elicit a big 'wow' from management and makes them truly understand that it is critical to have the right tools to keep our services up and running securely."

How does Sophos make everyone happier and more productive?

Garcia has become a huge Sophos fan. "We're happy, largely due to the functionality and ease of use. My technology team doesn't have to configure anything. Sophos is templated yet comprehensive security. There's nothing better on the market."

Additionally, Garcia can point to measurable ROI: "Sophos saves me time because I can identify threats and remove them quickly. When I take into account my entire team, I would say that on a monthly basis, the time we save is equivalent to at least one part-time person — which is an impressive saving."

Sophos is a win for users too. The IT team is able to provide users with greater convenience, improved protection, and access to upgraded services, including Wi-Fi, which was previously non-existent. Wi-Fi is now available in every administrative building.

"We've consolidated from the high-bandwidth demands



of multiple vendors and down to just one,” explains Garcia. “Productivity has vastly improved across the board — and now the diocese IT team can support Wi-Fi devices.”

What’s next?

Next up for Garcia is rolling out the Sophos endpoint protection to every parish and the Sophos firewall to every school. With Sophos on the endpoint and network, the entire Diocese can enjoy comprehensive security across every location. In collaboration with Heard from Data Integrity Services, Garcia looks forward to implementing Synchronized Security in the near future.

It’s also important that Garcia and his team take care of the users within the diocese. This includes the addition of Sophos Phish Threat to help with user education and security awareness training. Combining lightning-fast setup with informative and effective security training, Sophos Phish Threat helps organizations foster a culture dedicated to security best practices. With Garcia leading the way, the Diocese of Brooklyn is on the cutting edge of security and doing exactly that.

Start your free trial of
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