

Case Study

PDS Health Migrates to a New Data Center with Expanded Visibility from Gigamon



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JONATHAN ERUM

Infrastructure Architect, PDS Health

Challenges

- Aggregating network connectivity
- Balancing visibility across NIST's five functions: Recognize, Protect, Detect, Respond, Recover
- Achieving real-time, inline observability across the hybrid cloud
- Meeting HIPAA and ISO 27001 compliance

Customer Benefits

- Easy deployment with future scalability
- Complete visibility across network layers
- Faster data throughput and better utilization
- Centralized data for contextual response
- Streamlined HIPAA and ISO 27001 compliance

Solution

- GigaVUE® HC Series
- GigaSMART®
- GigaVUE-FM fabric manager

About Customer

PDS Health®, formerly Pacific Dental Services®, is a leading integrated healthcare support organization that helps clinicians deliver more connected, preventive care by expanding access to proven technologies, support, and best practices. The 30-year-old organization currently supports 1,050 dental and medical offices across 24 states in the U.S. and aims to open 100 new offices per year. It currently has 16,000 employees.

Infrastructure Architect Jonathan Erum has a long tenure with PDS Health and contributes to a wide range of projects, including network infrastructure, systems, and data center initiatives. Leon Verriere Jr., Manager of IT Infrastructure and Operations, leads the core infrastructure team and oversees a major data center migration.

Business Challenge

As a rapidly growing healthcare support organization, PDS Health wanted to boost its overall security posture and visibility to better protect its owner clinicians (licensed healthcare providers such as dentists, physicians, or nurse practitioners who own and lead their practices) and their patients. It launched an initiative to move and expand its hybrid cloud data center—consisting of private virtual machines (VMs), AWS, and existing Gigamon appliances—from Henderson, Nevada to a new location in Plano, Texas to better serve its customers' needs.

The organization wanted a solution that would help it to achieve ISO 27001 compliance, in addition to maintaining HIPAA compliance.

When planning the data center migration, Erum, at one point considered different solutions to aggregate and gain visibility into PDS Health's network traffic flows but found the Gigamon solution the best for not just network visibility and optimization, but also for enabling faster threat detection and increased security posture for the Security Operations teams. "Ultimately we came back to Gigamon and expanded our usage," he said. "We found that it was our best alternative."

Resolution

Erum and Verriere deployed a GigaVUE-HC1 appliance at the new data center to aggregate network connectivity and feed data to their existing security tools. They also installed a GigaVUE-FM fabric manager dashboard to help manage, configure, and operate the appliance, as well as the GigaSMART® suite of Gigamon applications to optimize network performance, improve security, and streamline traffic management.

GigaVUE-HC1 collects and feeds data to Darktrace, Armis, and the organization's other security applications. The data from Gigamon is critical for its security. As Erum explained, "Gigamon enables the security team to look for suspicious things in our environment. Without an aggregation device like Gigamon, we wouldn't have that capability."

Erum explained that his next step will be to start using the SSL decrypt, slicing, and masking features of Gigamon to enable the security stack to inspect traffic for hidden malicious content and ensuring sensitive data is fully protected to meet compliance requirements.

Benefit

A key benefit that Gigamon brought to the new data center is the streamlined ease and convenience that comes from having fewer ports to manage, connect to, and configure. "Implementation was really pretty easy," Verriere pointed out. "I don't have to dedicate specific ports—I can do it all from the Gigamon device. From an expandability perspective, in the future when we get some additional tools, we could just plug those into the Gigamon appliance."

In addition to the ease of deployment, Erum noted that Gigamon has provided faster data throughput and better utilization compared to the old data center.

These benefits will be helpful when it comes to implementing the security vision that CISO Nemi George described for PDS Health. George shared that, by having data all in one place, he can implement what he calls “contextual response.” He pointed out that, “The flexibility of Gigamon makes this possible. It’s not something that point solutions can do. Gigamon’s deep observability and the collection of log data in-line allows us to do so much with it. We can essentially act as a trip wire and intercept things before they cause problems.”

He explained how Gigamon provides visibility across the Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) stack—from physical connectivity to physical ports to applications. Using the comprehensive network traffic analysis from Gigamon, his team can see incoming web application traffic, application performance, and all standard network telemetry. With contextual response, George explained, they can also identify what an abnormal event looks like for each of the organization’s top 10 applications and then set up automated triggers to respond to them. “What does an abnormal event in Workday mean versus an abnormal event in Okta?” George asked. “You have to understand those triggers and make sure that your network is architected to observe and respond,” he said.

George also plans to utilize the GigaVUE-FM fabric manager dashboard to provide his team with the ability to track network performance, and security in near-real time. From the dashboard, they can respond, delegate, and assign responses when issues arise.

With Gigamon serving as the key aggregator for the organization’s new data center, PDS Health is well-positioned to expand its operations, implement new AI-powered security tools with ease, and extend in-line observability across all layers of its hybrid environment.

About Gigamon

Gigamon® offers a deep observability pipeline that efficiently delivers network-derived telemetry to cloud, security, and observability tools. This helps eliminate security blind spots and reduce tool costs, enabling you to better secure and manage your hybrid cloud infrastructure. Gigamon has served more than 4,000 customers worldwide, including over 80 percent of Fortune 100 enterprises, 9 of the 10 largest mobile network providers, and hundreds of governments and educational organizations. To learn more, please visit gigamon.com.



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