Registers of Scotland
ros.gov.uk

CASE STUDY

Registers of Scotland accelerates transformation with innovative Palo Alto Networks CDSS support

When Registers of Scotland had to close its offices during the pandemic, paper-based legal document processing – and the sale of property in Scotland – was put on pause. Building new, innovative digital services to allow registration to resume, Registers of Scotland also deployed the Palo Alto Networks WildFire cloud-delivered malware prevention service through integration via its API, to allow automatic submission of electronic files to the WildFire cloud for malware analysis. Thousands of digital property registration documents are now securely processed through these new systems every day; freeing up resources, increasing agility, lowering costs, and helping to protect the organisation's data.

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IN BRIEF

Customer
Registers of Scotland

Organisation Size
1,200 colleagues; two offices in Scotland

Industry
Public sector

Featured Products and Services
Land registry

Location
Edinburgh and Glasgow, Scotland

Challenges

Lockdown closure of offices prevented the processing of paper-based property conveyancing documents. Registers of Scotland needed a modern means of securely processing digital documentation without impacting the customer experience.

Requirements

- Automate secure processing of digital registry files without compromising customer experience.
- Automatically share intelligence to provide in-depth defence.
- Manage security services from a single, intuitive pane of glass.

Solution

Palo Alto Networks ML-Powered Next Generation Firewalls and VM-Series Next Generation Firewalls with WildFire, Threat Prevention, Advanced URL Filtering, and GlobalProtect, Palo Alto Networks XSOAR

CHALLENGES

Public registry of legal documents

Registers of Scotland is a non-ministerial office of the Scottish administration, responsible for maintaining records relating to property, and other legal documents.

Registers of Scotland is on an ambitious journey to digital transformation, re-platforming to a modern, cloud-first strategy based on Amazon Web Services (AWS). The outcome will be a more efficient organisation with the ability to pivot quickly around change; and a more engaging customer experience.

In this new strategy, security takes centre stage. Almost the entire Palo Alto Networks portfolio has been deployed to deliver complete, automated protection against cyberattacks. This includes connected network security, comprising Palo Alto Networks ML-Powered Next Generation Firewalls (NGFW), VM-Series NGFWs, and natively integrated Cloud-Delivered Security Services (CDSS) subscriptions.

The challenge for Registers of Scotland was to continue operations during the pandemic, when its Glasgow and Edinburgh offices were closed. At the time, the law required all property registrations and contracts to be conducted on paper.

Bob Bowden, Security Architect, Registers of Scotland, explains: “With colleagues working from home, we were unable to process paper transactions submitted by solicitors and other interested parties. Scottish property sales all but ground to a halt within a matter of days.”

In response, the Scottish Government passed urgent legislation allowing the submission of conveyancing documents via the web, rather than applications on paper only. However, Registers of Scotland still needed an automated means of scanning these incoming digital documents to eliminate malware risk prior to processing.

Rerouting files to the Palo Alto Networks NGFW for malware scanning was ruled out, as it would interrupt and delay file submission – compromising the customer experience.

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–Bob Bowden, Security Architect, Registers of Scotland

REQUIREMENTS

Securely process digital registry files

Bowden and his team needed to act fast to find a secure, seamless way to process digital files. The solution would need to meet their requirements to:

- Automate the secure processing of digitally submitted registry files without compromising the customer experience.
- Automatically share intelligence to provide in-depth defence.
- Manage security services from a single, intuitive pane of glass.

SOLUTION

Prevents unknown threats and automates protection

Integration with Palo Alto Networks WildFire via the API underpins the fast, seamless submission of digital registry submissions. The innovative application of this CDSS prevents unknown threats, automates protection, and allows Registers of Scotland to focus its valuable resources elsewhere. And the solution was created in less than three weeks.

So how does it work? Users drop digital documents onto a file share outside the Registers of Scotland network. Palo Alto Networks XSOAR initiates a playbook to search the file share periodically/when a new file is created. The WildFire API is called to analyse each file in WildFire's cloud analysis engine. If WildFire declares the verdict to be malicious, artefacts are extracted and protections are automatically delivered across the world, protecting all Palo Alto Networks customers in real time. For Registers of Scotland, malicious files are flagged, and validated benign files move automatically inside the network for processing.

Bowden explains: "This WildFire innovation has revolutionised registration. It has allowed the secure processing of thousands of digital registrations every day; we have dramatically decreased operational reliance on expensive scanning for the paper documents, and the process is significantly faster than before."

He adds: "Using WildFire, we were able to assure the Registers of Scotland governing body that the digital submission of legal documents would be 100% secure. Ultimately, this approach supported the change in Scottish law, upending hundreds of years of paper-based land registry processes."

Other CDSS are simultaneously helping to prevent and detect unknown malware, zero-day exploits, and other advanced cyberattacks. For example:

- GlobalProtect: Extends protection to Registers of Scotland's post-pandemic hybrid workforce regardless of location. It secures traffic by understanding application use and associating traffic with users and devices.
- Threat Prevention: Deployed on Registers of Scotland's virtual and physical NGFWs to provide multiple layers of prevention and confront threats at each phase of an attack, including from critical vulnerabilities like Apache Log4j, or Microsoft Exchange or MS-RDP attacks that could be the entry point for a breach. It goes beyond the traditional intrusion prevention system (IPS) to protect networks by detecting and blocking threats across all traffic – regardless of port or protocol.
- Advanced URL Filtering: Also used on Registers of Scotland's virtual and physical NGFWs to provide real-time protection. It combines the capabilities of a database of malicious URLs with an ML-powered web protection engine to instantly detect web-based threats.

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BENEFITS

Creates a modern, agile property register

The benefits of the CDSS include:

- **Improved customer experience:** The CDSS portfolio simplifies the customer application journey, enabling faster processing of applications, greater visibility of registrations, and the elimination of physical documents. According to a recent Registers of Scotland report, 94% of applications were received digitally in 2020-21, up from 38% in 2019-20.
- **Increased agility and scalability:** Using the WildFire API, Registers of Scotland processes thousands of digital legal documents every day, streamlining services and liberating resources for value-add tasks. As they are cloud-delivered, every customer creates a network effect that enhances the prevention offered to benefit every other customer.
- **Compliance support:** The innovative application of the WildFire API supports the connected security infrastructure, enabling Registers of Scotland to minimise vulnerabilities and meet its statutory and regulatory obligations.

Bowden concludes: "With WildFire malware analysis, Registers of Scotland has visibility into everything. Intelligent automation minimises our risk while maximising the end user experience."

> The security visibility and focus on prevention is enabling Registers of Scotland to achieve the cloud migration at great speed without unquantified risk.

–Bob Bowden, Security Architect, Registers of Scotland

Read the full Registers of Scotland case study and discover the value Registers of Scotland gained by using Palo Alto Networks Prisma Cloud.

3000 Tannery Way
Santa Clara, CA 95054

Main: +1.408.753.4000
Sales: +1.866.320.4788
Support: +1.866.898.9087

www.paloaltonetworks.com