Delivering secure remote access with trailblazing solution

ACM is Australia's largest independent publisher. Through its 140 mastheads, the company reaches 6.4 million Australians every month. Its stable comprises 14 daily newspapers including the Canberra Times, Newcastle Herald, and the Courier in Ballarat. ACM also provides creative marketing solutions and community support programs.

How does a publishing house provide secure and seamless remote working for a hybrid workforce?

The ability to offer remote and hybrid working options to employees has always been central to ACM's business, where journalists are often on the road chasing down stories. The pandemic exacerbated this requirement, and today around half of ACM's workforce are hybrid employees. The company therefore has a requirement to provide staff, who are located across Australia, with secure and seamless access to enterprise applications and the internet.

Richard Agius, Head of Technology Services at ACM, comments: "We recognized that we needed a virtual private network (VPN) to support remote working. However, we wanted an approach that was easier for our employees to use than traditional VPNs and with more uptime. We also identified a need for a flexible way of securing web traffic. This was a challenge for our business because sites that are often blocked by web filters are important for journalists to access when researching stories."

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ACM

Profile

Industry	Region	Employees	Publications
Media	Australia	2000	160+

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Challenges
- Enable secure remote working for highly mobile workforce
- Implement smart policy controls to meet needs of journalists
- Ensure compatibility with Chromebooks

Solutions
- Netskope NPA for secure ZTNA to corporate apps
- Netskope Next Generation SWG to secure web access and spot data exfiltration
- Custom Chromebook plug-in

Results
- Enhanced visibility and control of remote users
- Simplified remote working for employees

netskope

Security that's ready for anything

A cutting-edge private access network

The decision to partner with Netskope came as ACM was given a six-month deadline to separate from its parent company following its sale. That left Agius and his team very little time in which to deploy its Security Service Edge (SSE) solution based on Netskope's NPA and Next Gen SWG. Agius adds: "Given the time pressures, there were some teething troubles, but Netskope provided us with technical expertise and training sessions to get to grips with its technology and configure it properly. That's when we discovered the true power of Netskope."

By deploying NPA in full in 2019, ACM was blazing a trail with one of the most cutting-edge solutions on the market. Where issues arose during deployment, Netskope was able to build new features and functionality into the NPA, improving the system even as it was rolled out. Whereas most companies are only starting out on the NPA journey, ACM now benefits from a fully deployed solution.

The NPA provides zero trust network access to enterprise and public cloud applications for ACM's employees regardless of location. Senthil Thirunavukkarasu, Network and Security Manager at ACM, explains: "Most of our employees only need access to their work applications, so the NPA provides a more appropriate approach compared to traditional VPNs, which give access to the entire network." Meanwhile, the Next Gen SWG delivers complete visibility and control of traffic flowing from user devices to and from the public internet.

"The NPA helps reduce our threat surface, which is a significant security boost. Rather than access the full network, our remote users can now only access the applications they need."

–Senthil Thirunavukkarasu, Network and Security Manager, ACM

Complete visibility and control of remote workers

For ACM, the standout benefit of Netskope is that it enables complete control and visibility of remote users. Through the Next Gen SWG, the technology team can flexibly control access to sites as required by employees. "If journalists need access to blocked content, we can enable that for them quickly so they can get on with their jobs," says Agius. "At present we enable access for all, but we will soon be able to filter access according to job function."

Thirunavukkarasu adds: "The system is completely silent to the end user. We can put in place the protection and policy controls we need to secure the business without affecting their experience. The NPA also helps reduce our threat surface, which is a significant security boost. Rather than access the full network, our remote users can now only access the applications they need."

Netskope has proved to be a true partner to ACM. For example, the company decided to use Chromebooks as its device of choice. At the time, Netskope had only a few NPA customers on the devices, so its technical team worked closely with ACM and Google to ensure the best possible experience on the Chrome OS. The resulting Netskope plug-in is now an integral part of its NPA.

Finally, ACM benefits from the close support provided by Netskope. Agius concludes: "Ticket requests are down since deploying Netskope, but on the rare occasions we need technical support we know Netskope is always there to help. It's great to have that resource available as we navigate this cutting-edge system."