Customer Profile

Established in 1954, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is the nation's largest and most effective animal-protection organization, serving as America's mainstream force against cruelty, exploitation, and neglect. Based in Washington, D.C., the not-for-profit organization has offices throughout the country and employs approximately 450 people.

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Situation

In late 2008, HSUS sought to implement a cost-effective, secure network infrastructure to support the organization's growing business and communication goals, as well as enable advanced Web 2.0 applications to better serve constituents and members, and better entice new donors. HSUS' relatively small IT staff was challenged in maintaining the organization's existing disparate network core, which consisted of 15 switches and 10 servers in 10 remote offices. Additionally, it's headquarters frequently lost power, creating the need for redundancy and a robust disaster-recovery solution.

"Our prior system had a lot of latency, was unsupported, and lacked the growth potential we required," explains Laura Folden, director of IT, the Humane Society of the United States. "We needed a redundant, supportable, scalable infrastructure with better throughput to support internal communications for our growing staff as well as for our outreach efforts.

"Our vision was to replace our aging infrastructure and set up Virtual Local Area Networks (VLANs) for specific segments of our company to centralize data storage and accommodate technology innovations. Additionally, we needed to improve network security and be Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliant. And as a not-for-profit, we needed to ensure our funding directly supported these primary missions as cost effectively as possible."

To satisfy its goals, HSUS called on Hunt Valley, Maryland-based Continental Technologies, Inc. (CTI), to install a robust Cisco network infrastructure. The Cisco Premier Certified Partner founded in 1985 had the experience and expertise HSUS required, as well as a Cisco AT Security Specialization – making them a strong fit.

Solution

In February 2009, CTI implemented a robust Cisco infrastructure, including Cisco Catalyst 3750 and 4500 switches to enable HSUS to deploy secure, resilient, and scalable unified data, voice, and video networks. The advanced Power over Ethernet (PoE) switches provide operational efficiency through automation, energy sustainability, and lower total cost of ownership. They also deliver hardware-

based quality of service, video delivery, multicast, security, and IPv6 advantages, as well as support Cisco EnergyWise technology, which helps HSUS manage power consumption of its network infrastructure and network-attached devices.

Results

"We now have a supportable, faster LAN infrastructure with gigabit end-to-end throughput," says Folden. "With no bottlenecks, our Internet and email is consistently faster so we can be more efficient and better collaborate throughout the organization. And our online, video, and accounting departments can do things they couldn't prior, such as quickly upload files, easily maintain our online presence, and better reach our constituents and members with advanced interactive outreach efforts.

"Administratively, the solution is almost a no-touch system and we have fewer switches to worry about. The equipment is strong, requires minimal maintenance, and functions beautifully. And it's great to know the solution will easily scale as our needs grow.

"CTI and Cisco delivered a cost-effective, reliable solution with the disaster-recovery and PCI-compliancy we needed, and the implementation was quick and smooth. They helped us maximize our dollars and really went the extra mile in helping us understanding our needs and continue to provide solutions and support that will help our organization for years to come. We definitely foresee a long-term partnership."

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