

Leading enterprise application provider achieves secure public-cloud migration

Barracuda helps Unit4 with GDPR compliance while delivering critical applications securely via Microsoft Azure



About Unit4

As one of the leading providers of ERP and other enterprise applications, Unit4 requires a high-capacity, high-availability platform for delivering application services to support numerous clients located around the world. Until recently, it employed its own data centers and application servers to maintain a high quality of service. As the business grew, this entailed increasingly significant costs, in part because of the need for over-provisioning resources to manage the increasing magnitude of both expected and unexpected surges in demand.

In order to reduce these costs and increase overall agility, the company made the decision to make a strong move to a public-cloud platform. In 2016, a team was assembled with the objective of migrating Unit4 products and services into the Microsoft Azure cloud. As Compliance Manager for the Unit4 Global Cloud team, Kamil Bielawa was responsible for ensuring that the migrated products and services were secured appropriately.

As Bielawa says, “We handle a lot of very sensitive data for our customers. So security has to be a top priority for us. And because of our global scale and large number of enterprise customers, it’s a complex challenge with a lot of moving parts. Under the shared-responsibility model of security in the cloud, one of my jobs was to select a third-party security solution that could meet that challenge.”

Profile

- Headquarters in Utrecht, The Netherlands
- Provides ERP and other enterprise software globally
- ~4,200 employees
- Annual revenue of 600M Euros
- Founded in 1980

Challenges

- Needed to secure ERP application delivery through Microsoft Azure
- Had to fulfill 99.8% uptime SLA
- Needed to ensure compliance with PCI DSS and GDPR

Solutions

- Barracuda CloudGen Firewall deployed in multiple, global Azure environments

Results

- Significant cost savings thanks to easy, intuitive management interface
- Competitive differentiation thanks to high security and high availability
- Fulfilled requirements regarding regulatory compliance including GDPR

The company's requirements included redundant, high-availability firewalls able to span multiple geographic regions. In addition, they needed to be able to have visibility and control over network traffic across all seven layers of ISO/OSI model. Bielawa's team decided to evaluate three different third-party firewall offerings, including the Barracuda CloudGen Firewall—which was specifically recommended by the Microsoft team assisting with the project.

Evaluating competing solutions

"From the outset, the Barracuda offering looked promising," says Bielawa. "It was clearly very well integrated into the Azure infrastructure, with thorough documentation that made deployment in the proof-of-concept phase easy and smooth." In addition, his team was pleased by the simple and intuitive user interface, which enabled clean and fast configuration. As Bielawa says, "The user experience was wonderful. Everything is in the right spot."

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Kamil Bielawa

Global Cloud Compliance Manager, Unit4

Apart from ease of use and readiness for deployment, Bielawa's team had to verify several factors during the evaluation phase:

- Support for PCI DSS compliance
- Ability to deliver high availability in accordance with Unit4's 99.8 percent SLA
- Ease of creating and deploying new rules
- Ability to manage and control traffic beyond Layer 3

Barracuda CloudGen Firewall succeeded in satisfying all these requirements. In combination with the additional requirements around overall ease of use, this led the team to decide on the Barracuda solution. In August, 2016, Unit4 deployed its first set of Barracuda CloudGen Firewall deployments in the Microsoft Azure North Europe region.

"We undertook our global Azure migration in phases," says Bielawa. "By September, 2017, we had also onboarded Barracuda firewalls in Australia, Ireland, the UK, the United States, Canada, and Singapore. In each region, the deployment and configuration has gone off without a hitch. That's thanks in large part to the simple and user-friendly interface, but also to the incredibly supportive customer service provided by the Barracuda team. When a complicated case came up, even though it was not caused by the Barracuda product, their support engineer went all-out to assist us in getting it resolved."

Benefits and future plans

Almost immediately, Bielawa and his team were able to realize significant benefits from their transition to Azure with security provided by Barracuda CloudGen Firewall. "The Barracuda firewalls are very low maintenance, and can be deployed easily and quickly," says Bielawa. "We used to run into difficulties with securing and optimizing certain remote-desktop traffic, and Barracuda Firewall instantly eliminated those difficulties."

Security and high availability are also delivering tangible benefits. "The ability to deliver our applications securely via Azure gives us an unmistakable competitive edge, and our customers see that. In addition, our redundant, high-availability use of the Barracuda firewalls has already prevented service interruptions. So that's another key differentiator for us."

Like any company with operations in the European Union, Unit4 is keenly aware of the need to comply with the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which goes into effect in May, 2018. "GDPR clearly states that we need to have strong security in place. Barracuda CloudGen Firewall is a critical element of our compliance plan."

Unit4's Barracuda CloudGen Firewall deployments are in full production. Going forward, Bielawa expects to implement a new feature of version 7.1, Named Networks. "Proof of concept shows that this will really streamline our processes for defining new rules, and also make it much easier to interpret logs."

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With the high number of firewalls deployed, Bielawa also is looking into Barracuda Firewall Control Center, which will give him centralized, single-pane-of-glass management across all deployments. "We're still evaluating Firewall Control Center, but if all goes well, I expect that it will multiply our cost savings in terms of administrative overhead.

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