

Priority for Security

QIB gets maximum power from TippingPoint IPS



CASE STUDY

User:
Qatar Islamic Bank

Country:
Qatar

Industry:
Finance

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Background

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB), established in 1982, is Qatar's first and largest Islamic bank. Originally founded as a Qatari Shareholding Company, QIB has developed into a pioneer of global Islamic banking, contributing significantly to Qatar's economic growth in the past decade. Within Qatar, the bank holds a 51.4% share of the local Islamic banking market and a 9% share of the local banking market overall. Its international ambitions have seen QIB expand its investment operations in the Middle East, Asia and Europe, with plans to establish banking operations in Egypt, Turkey and the Gulf.

Challenges

When QIB began planning and concept work on a state-of-the-art data centre, it was designed to act as the focal point of its technological infrastructure. As a financial institution, the bank had certain requirements for the centre's network security, relating particularly to efficiency, manageability and scalability. The primary objective of which was the implementation of an Intrusion Prevention System (IPS) that could provide Layer 2 – Layer 7 Deep Packet Inspection at 10G speed, without compromising network performance.

QIB's Chief Information Officer (CIO), Hammad El Zamli notes that it was also necessary for the IPS to have the capacity to keep the network "up and running in the event of a power loss or component failure". El Zamli further explained how the bank's lengthy patch management and change management procedures potentially revealed vulnerabilities in the network. The processes had to be updated in order to maintain a current and effective security network.

Solution

Faced with these concerns, QIB approached vendors, ultimately deciding upon the services of network solutions provider, TippingPoint.

Mostafa Essemmar, Information Security Manager at QIB, explains that the bank chose TippingPoint for a multitude of reasons. Its efficient hardware design, he explained, meant that TippingPoint appliances have an average one-way latency of less than 120 microseconds when operating at 10G speed. TippingPoint's hardware also has the ability to take care of any networking



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issues that arise when supporting both layer 2 and Layer 3 protocols.

"Aside from the hardware itself, it was the Digital Vaccine service, which demonstrated TippingPoint's supremacy over other vendors," explains Essemmar. Adding that his team was "impressed" by TippingPoint's track record of zero-day vulnerability discoveries, coverage of published vulnerabilities and timeliness in releasing its digital vaccine filters.

In relation to product specifics, QIB divided its network security into two categories; perimeter protection and core server protection. The bank deployed two TP600E systems in its perimeter defence and a combination of two core controllers and two TP2400E systems to guard its core server farm, all of which are centrally managed through TippingPoint's Security Management System (SMS). El Zamli, QIB's CIO, detailed how the system has enabled the bank to update and conduct its step-by-step patch management and change management processes "without rushing through them".

Result

QIB holds the distinction of being the first financial institution in the Middle East to deploy a 10G Network Intrusion Prevention System (NIPS). El Zamli explained that the system has satisfied his department's needs in accordance with the bank's main priorities.

Realizing the bank's key network objective, TippingPoint's Core Controller solution "has been able to provide full-duplex deep inspection from 2 Gbps up to 20 Gbps in a single 10G link without adding any third-party products". Mostafa Essemmar also noted that the system's "ease of configuration and management" has significantly increased the functionality of QIB's network security processes.

Although the bank holds no immediate expansion plans for its network security system, the system's capacity to grow is unquestionable. Built upon a 'pay-as-you-grow' concept, TippingPoint's Core Controller solution allows for IPS systems to be simply added when the 10G utilization/throughput grows. This means that the investment can be divulged over multiple budget cycles, making its scalability more economical than other systems, providing an excellent ROI.

