



SSL VPN FULFILLS EVERY ORGANISATION'S NEED

In the era of mobile devices, every organization's VPN network system management aims to increase performance efficiency with ability to let users access information anywhere, anytime. VPN also enables better communication between staff within the same organisation or with business partners. In addition, issues regarding efficient management and management of security threats from the Internet are often brought up.

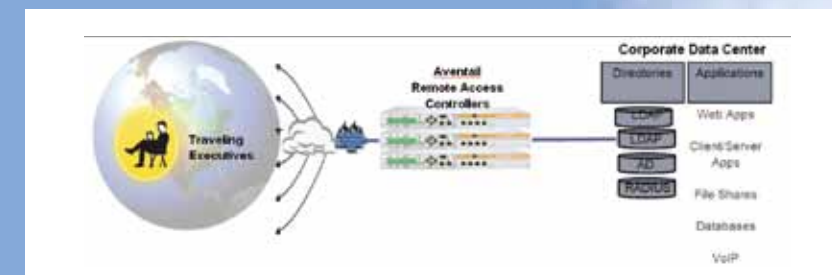
Mr. Saroj Yuttatri, Director of Information Technology Operations and Services Department said Thai Airways International is one such leading company in Thailand which constantly looks for solutions to meet different needs to enhance the work efficiency of its staff, especially its aircrew and pilots who need to have international access to the company's network. However, the solution must follow the company policy which is "Any Authorized person can access Information in Any System from Anywhere at Any time via Any Device" and to effectively customize the network to accommodate different needs. Hence it is essential to select the right technology to address the organization's needs.

Main issue: Anytime, Anywhere, Any device access

As earlier mentioned, Network Security Policy requires VPN network to connect to THAI' IT system, which previously used IPsec VPN, a complicated working format as applications had to be installed on every PC in order to be connected to the network. This makes it difficult when applications have to be upgraded on clients' machines, as they have to be individually upgraded on every client's machine.

Another problem is the management of personal security networks tunneling from client to VPN gateways, which the previous system was unable to do. This is because security policy restricts ports from working, especially closing of IPsec port but keep ports 80 and 443 opened. Furthermore, the NAT from the router was found to prevent tunnel establishment.

Hence THAI needed to find new solutions to solve the network managing problems. They also wanted to find ways to increase staff efficiency by enabling them to access the network from any device (PC, notebook or mobile phone) and work wherever they are. It would be specially convenient for most of their aircrew to be connected through mobile phone. Though IPsec VPN can be used, it can also be complicated. However, a study by the IT department found



that SSL VPN technology was likely to be able to solve these problems.

To find the most suitable SSL VPN equipment, THAI considered products from Gartner's Magic Quadrant, and did POC (Proof of Concept) on the short-listed products, with an the average testing time of around 1 month. SonicWALL Aventura's product was found to be the best match for the company's needs.

SSL VPN Easy Implement

Thai Airways International categorises users into 3 groups; 1) Central IT department for general use and telecommunication, 2) Those who constantly use their PC or laptop, and 3) cabin crew (including aircrew and pilots) who mainly access the network via their mobile phones. The latter 2 groups would use SSL VPN equipped with 2-3 applications such as web applications in intranet and corporate e-mail, which can be accessed via Web-based, IMAP, and POP.

After implementation, SSL VPN was observed to be able to solve core issues that IPsec VPN was unable to, such as version upgrades which previously had to be individually installed in every client's machine.

Another plus was that the implementation of SSL VPN is mostly fuss-free. There is

almost no need for extra training for the average user, and with just the aid of instructions in the manual, they can resume work immediately, unlike other systems where in-depth training is required.

Perfect network for an organization

After the complete implementation of SSL VPN, Thai Airways International created a new dimension of network system for all staff. General users can access e-mail, which includes eLearning, from home. This can improve overall staff work efficiency. Moreover, the system also benefits executives who have to travel abroad for meetings, as they can access e-mail and instantly retrieve important information from the organisation's network.

IT users can telecommunicate quickly as SSL VPN makes use of Remote Access via Hi-speed Internet, which is faster than Dial up systems which have speeds not exceeding 56k. The IT department or programmer can also access information and manage work from home, thus increasing the efficiency of operations.

The advantages of SSL VPN technology can clearly be seen from the positive changes that the cabin crew have experienced. They need not to make regular visit to the office to receive their flight schedule or to take leave,

as those can be done immediately via their mobile devices. However, the main benefit is that the cabin crew can be briefed about detailed in-flight information, such as passenger names, VIPs, passenger with illness, or those who need special care or service, all via their mobile devices.

Apart from effectively responding to the needs of various groups of users within the organization, SSL VPN is also able to restrict connections that may contain threats, and it can handle viruses or other risks hidden within the network system.

What makes Sonic Wall's SSL VPN a cut above the rest is its ease of use and simple User Interface. Its after-sale service is very efficient, and updates or hotfix can be done quickly. The company also regularly sends information on updates or new versions of products, so that a truly effective implementation can be done.



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(Right) Mr. Saroj Yuttatri, Director of Information Technology Operations and Services Department

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