

## Total network visibility and control brings Møre and Romsdal Council security and simplicity, saving time and money

### BACKGROUND

Møre and Romsdal Council is part of county-level government in Norway, responsible for the well-being of around 250,000 people in the west of the country. Its 2,400 employees are responsible for the region's transport infrastructure, culture, business development, dental care and secondary education for around 10,000 high school students.

Network integrity is an imperative, and Møre and Romsdal Council works with Palo Alto Networks™ to deliver next-generation firewall security for a new generation of threats.

### THE PROBLEM

Møre and Romsdal Council was involved in a constant battle with modern malware threats. A range of firewall solutions from multiple vendors simply couldn't keep track of the threats and maintenance was complex and labour intensive. Unable to see what was happening on its network, the Council focused instead on hardening its servers and infrastructure to minimise the impact of infection.

This ongoing vulnerability was compounded by the openness of the network. Shared offices meant unauthorised users could plug in, and employees often accessed insecure connections whilst travelling. Furthermore, all of Møre and Romsdal's 10,000 high school students receive a laptop and internet access from government and have complete control over how they use them, including the security software used. In effect, Møre and Romsdal had a myriad of open doors onto its network.

Educational problems were compounded by the fact that teachers had no idea what applications students were running in the classroom; competing for attention with social media, video streaming and gaming sites. With personal laptops used during exams, it also opened up the very real danger of cheating.

Matters came to a head when, despite deploying the latest and constantly updated malware protection software, the Council suffered significant disruption from a virus attack. Møre and Romsdal Council needed a simple, cost effective solution that brought visibility and control of its network — fast.

### THE DECISION

External consultants recommended that Møre and Romsdal trial market leading firewall solutions, leading to some unexpected results. As Møre and Romsdal Council's Systems Administrator Øystein Kaldhol explained, "We assumed that offerings would be very similar, but Palo Alto Networks was in a different league. Alternatives left us with the same problems and in some cases caused us new ones, but Palo Alto Networks showed us everything on our network in real-time. It was a real eye-opener."



Møre og Romsdal  
fylkeskommune

#### ORGANIZATION:

Møre and Romsdal Council

#### INDUSTRY:

Public Sector

#### CHALLENGE:

- Council could not keep track of the threats within its network.
- Network maintenance was complex and labour intensive.
- Shared offices meant network was open to unauthorised users, and 10,000 students were able to access insecure connections through their laptops.

#### SOLUTION:

- Deployed Palo Alto Networks next-generation firewall to combat modern malware threats and reveal existing infections.

#### RESULTS:

- Council uses next-generation firewall to stop tens of thousands of attacks against its internet-exposed servers, killing them off at the perimeter.
- Separated client and server networks to identify any individual accessing the network and, if necessary, isolate them.
- Reduced the number of security devices and firewalls by 60 per cent, slashing administration time and CAPEX.

*“One of our first things that Palo Alto Networks showed us was that in some of our locations, around a half of the computers were infected by Botnets — today we have none at all in the computers owned by the Council, and those that the students manage to introduce on their private computers are swiftly dealt with.”*

**Øystein Kaldhol,  
Systems Administrator,  
Møre and Romsdal Council**

For the first time, Palo Alto Networks next-generation firewall solution allows Møre and Romsdal Council to view all network traffic in granular detail. Kaldhol can now see and control what applications individuals are using and identify and eliminate threats before they gain access to their system. It means one simple and easy to use solution that covers the spectrum of threats in a single security engine.

### BENEFITS

Kaldhol said, “One of our first things that Palo Alto Networks showed us was that in some of our locations, around a half of the computers were infected by Botnets — today we have none at all in the computers owned by the Council, and those that the students manage to introduce on their private computers are swiftly dealt with. With the solution’s vulnerability protection, we can stop tens of thousands of attacks against our internet-exposed servers, killing them off at the perimeter. It’s an enormous reduction in risk that means I can actually sleep at night!”

As well as capturing and killing threats, Palo Alto Networks is overcoming the challenges associated with Møre and Romsdal’s open user environment. It’s helping the Council to separate its client and server networks: Kaldhol can now identify any individual accessing the network, see what they’re doing and, where necessary, isolate them.

It’s a capability that’s also allowing Møre and Romsdal Council to put the teacher back in control in the classroom. Using a simple GUI, the teacher can block access to non-educational applications and further limit access to a small number of pre-determined sites during exams. It removes external temptations and helps students to stay focused in class.

Palo Alto Networks is delivering significant cost and resource savings too. Møre and Romsdal Council has reduced the number of security devices and firewalls by 60 per cent, slashing administration time and CAPEX. At a time when public finances are under pressure, Kaldhol estimates that it’s saving the Council substantial amounts every year, compared to the alternatives.

### CONCLUSION

“For me, the difference between the Palo Alto Networks firewall and its competitors is night and day,” said Kaldhol. “We’re not only detecting and eliminating threats long before they can do any damage, we’re also removing the opportunities for attacks on our network in the first place — and all this in a single, simple and cost effective solution. In fact, Palo Alto Networks has been so effective at showing me just how hostile the online environment is — and the need for next generation solutions — that I’m investing in it for my computer at home.”