

CASE STUDY

HIGHNET FINDS CORERO SMARTWALL® TDS IS

THE SMART CHOICE FOR DDoS PROTECTION

HighNet operates a high-bandwidth, high-availability, voice-centric network to ensure that business customers can maximise the potential of cloud services and low-latency internet access. With 25 years' experience in telecoms, they are experts in hosted telephony, unified communications, mobile communications and data connectivity. HighNet's customers range from small SMEs through to national and international enterprises and organisations.

HighNet is a class-leading provider of business voice and data solutions sold through a network of Channel Partners.

> Corero Smartwall at a glance



- » Surgically removes DDoS attack traffic automatically, before it reaches critical systems, ensuring optimal performance and maximum availability.
- » Delivers line-rate, in-line distributed denial of service attack protection, from 1Gbps to 100Gbps per rack unit, in a solution that scales to Terabits per second of protected throughput.
- » Prevents the impact of attacks ranging from simple volumetric floods, to sophisticated state exhaustion attacks, at layers 3 to 7.
- » Delivers comprehensive visibility for analysis and forensics, before, during and after attacks.



>the challenge

Towards the end of 2016, HighNet had a growing awareness of the threat of Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks; they hadn't been attacked, but they knew that a large-scale attack on one of their customers could overwhelm their IP transit connections and have a material effect on hundreds or thousands of other customers across their network.

Their only DDoS defense at the time was monitoring and alerting on their network traffic levels and then relying on their upstream providers to blackhole suspicious traffic. The company grew to realize that this blunt instrument approach, which results in good traffic being blackholed along with the bad traffic, was increasingly unacceptable.

HighNet understood that DDoS attacks were going to become more common and sophisticated, requiring a DDoS mitigation defense that was faster, more accurate, and would allow good traffic to flow normally while blocking only the DDoS traffic.

Smartwall is the "Smart Choice"

After considering various DDoS mitigation options, HighNet selected the Corero SmartWall® Threat Defense System (TDS). They ruled out some solutions for technical reasons, and others because they required significant upfront investment in hardware, software, ongoing maintenance, and professional services to design and deliver the deployment. In contrast, Corero delivered that expertise as part of the package, which meant that HighNet didn't have to spend a five-figure sum for it. Furthermore, *"Corero's pay-as-you-go commercial model was spot-on, a perfect fit for us, because we didn't have to make a large upfront investment to deploy it on our network,"* said David Alldritt, HighNet's Technology and Innovation Director.

That business model has allowed HighNet to fund their investment by productizing their DDoS protection and offering it as-a-service, which has a positive effect on their bottom-line results. HighNet does give customers the chance to opt-out, but has found that not many have chosen to do so and some that did opt-out initially were later hit by DDoS attacks, so they opted back in to the DDoS protection service.

The Corero SmartWall TDS is deployed in-line, at the perimeter of its network. *"Certainly, the always-on protection on our network edge, rather than being on someone else's cloud is an important design feature for our network architecture,"* says Alldritt. *"Everywhere that our network touches the public Internet we have Corero protecting that edge, we don't have any manual intervention, we don't have to re-route traffic, so we're maximizing our security and operational effectiveness. That architectural piece makes the SmartWall deployment the smart choice for us."*

Output from the Corero solution into the SmartWall Service Portal, a multi-tenant service portal application, helps HighNet's customers get the information they need about their environment. *"That factor was spot on, a great fit for us,"* said Alldritt. *"We've been doing a lot to try to improve our business systems to reduce human intervention and error, which incurs costs. By using the Corero platform we are able to measure and identify the level of protection our customers have and also integrate that with our billing platform and CRM system, which is cost effective, efficient and done without error."*

Results for GARR

- » No blocking of legitimate customer traffic
- » No longer dependent on a third-party to block DDoS attacks
- » Maximum levels of service availability are maintained for customers, even in the face of a DDoS event
- » DDoS attacks are automatically mitigated locally at each of their multiple locations across the UK
- » Reduced staff numbers and time required for handling DDoS attacks
- » Improved customer satisfaction
- » Improved brand reputation
- » Service offering is differentiated from competing providers

Alldritt said, "After having the initial solution in place for almost three years, when it came time to upgrade we had absolutely no reason to shop around for an alternative because we are delighted with the way the solution works, and Corero made the hardware upgrade so flexible and easy for us."

>the benefits

Since implementing Corero's SmartWall TDS, HighNet has seen regular — and sometimes repeat — attacks on some of their customers that are quite large in volume, and a few that were of significant duration. "All attacks have been mitigated, so they are happy customers," said Alldritt. "The Corero SmartWall has handled every DDoS attack that has been thrown at us, so we haven't had to explore any gaps."

Alldritt receives weekly and monthly reports from his network team, as well as any notable events, to understand which DDoS attacks have been detected and mitigated. Alldritt notes that he and his team have not had any false positives, which is an important reassurance that the SmartWall is not blocking any good traffic. "It just works so well, and so consistently, that we've reached a stage where I don't need to worry about the various types of attacks that are attempted. We have the benefit of local always-on protection that's built on global threat analysis intelligence, so we don't have to worry about it. When a zero-day attack occurs, Corero's global learnings are automatically applied directly on our network."

Excellent Customer Support

Corero's follow-the-sun 24x7x365 team is always on call to ensure SmartWall customers get the support they need. The automated nature of SmartWall's protection has ensured that HighNet staff have not needed to call on that too often. "After we learned the basics of the system, we rarely need Corero support, but when we do, we quickly get the answers we need. There has been only one significant incident in three years that needed immediate attention from Corero," said Alldritt.



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