

# Zscaler™ secures AutoNation's drive to the cloud

AutoNation, America's largest auto retailer, is a Fortune 500 company with over 10 million customers and counting. Founded in 1996, AutoNation owns and operates over 360 new and used car franchises throughout the U.S. and has more than 26,000 employees.

To support a rapidly expanding business, AutoNation faced some unique challenges with securing Internet-connected computer systems and IoT devices in widely distributed locations. With many locations and limited IT resources, AutoNation needed centralized controls for managing Internet security policies, monitoring and responding to threats, and ensuring that employees had reliable access to the Internet resources needed to support the business.

## AutoNation

Fort Lauderdale, Florida  
[www.autonation.com](http://www.autonation.com)

AutoNation, America's largest auto retailer, is a Fortune® 500 company with over 26,000 Associates at over 360 new and used vehicle franchises throughout the United States.

**Locations:** 360 across the U.S.

**User Count:** 26,000

**Industry:** Retail, automotive

**Zscaler Product:** Zscaler for Office 365, Cloud Sandbox, Next-Generation Cloud Firewall

Customer @ A Glance

## THE CHALLENGE

Applying consistent and robust security across all retail and corporate locations was the challenge AutoNation faced while evaluating perimeter security solutions. Each location's network includes an Internet point of presence as well as a direct connection to AutoNation's data center. Additionally, each of the more than 30 car manufacturers supported by AutoNation has slightly different requirements regarding connectivity, especially concerning Internet-connected vehicle diagnostic systems. Like many organizations, AutoNation found that most of its traffic was Internet bound, particularly as the company began using more cloud services. And like all companies, it was concerned about the increasing frequency and sophistication of Internet-borne threats.

Routing all Internet traffic from AutoNation's retail locations through the company's data center was determined to be too inefficient and costly, considering the preemptive price of private circuit bandwidth. Deploying Unified Threat Management (UTM) devices to each store was also unfavorable due to the increased cost of hardware, implementation, and maintenance, as well as the added lifecycle management and administration costs of over

360 new devices. According to Ken Athanasiou, Chief Information Security Officer at AutoNation, "When faced with having to deploy and manage little stacks of iron in over 360 locations, my immediate thought was going to a cloud-based solution."

A cloud-based Internet security solution would allow AutoNation to provide the Internet accessibility needed for retail business, while ensuring strong standardized security controls are enforced across all locations—all without spending capital resources on hardware. Zscaler allows AutoNation to protect and control Internet-bound traffic and reduce the retail store technology footprint. With Zscaler, different policies can be applied for various needs in the retail location. Guest Wi-Fi, Shop Tools diagnostic devices, and corporate network policies can all be accommodated—all managed from a central administrative console.

“The timeframe we rolled out in would simply have not been possible with appliances, and there was immediate value from our deployment.”

Ken Athanasiou | Chief Information Security Officer, AutoNation



## AUTONATION BEGINS MOVING SECURELY TO THE CLOUD

Following a successful proof of concept, AutoNation began rolling out Zscaler platform services across the country. Today, AutoNation forwards all its end-user Internet-bound traffic to the Zscaler cloud via GRE tunneling. According to Jeff Johnson, AutoNation's Director of Security Operations, "Today, most of our business-related traffic is Internet based. For example, our DMS and CRM are both Internet applications hosted in our data center. We'd like to get to a place where we've got outbound ports 80 and 443 open and not much else."

The Zscaler rollout was uncomplicated. Initial capabilities were rolled out in two to three months, and the company had fully deployed the platform in less than a year. Today, the IT team enjoys centralized management and reporting functions with one integrated dashboard. Administration costs have been slashed because there is no need to manage and maintain hardware, and capital expenses have been replaced by the simple, predictable subscription cost of the Zscaler service.

AutoNation began seeing the value of Zscaler immediately upon deployment. "When we started rolling out the product, we got visibility into the ineffectiveness of our antivirus (AV) solution," noted Athanasiou. "We could see Zscaler blocking command-and-control traffic from a system in our environment, so we'd track it down and find out the AV was disabled or not updating virus signatures. Zscaler immediately squashed that outbound traffic."

What AutoNation found when it turned on the Zscaler service was eye-opening for senior leadership. Athanasiou and his team were aware they had botnet issues and

Zscaler verified them. Athanasiou remarked, "We saw that we were getting periodic instances of botnet traffic from infections. We were able to clean those up quickly, because we were able to identify all the infected workstations." Johnson adds, "We also found a lot of P2P traffic going in and out of our network to clients we weren't familiar with. We were able to use Zscaler's full packet inspection firewall to turn off that P2P traffic, so we could stop BitTorrent and other P2P file sharing services." He continued, "We were able to cut about 500 gigabytes per month of P2P file-sharing bandwidth out of our network."



## CLOUD SANDBOX AND ADVANCED THREAT PROTECTION ACROSS THE NATION

After its initial Zscaler deployment, AutoNation decided to add another layer of security with sandbox behavioral analysis to protect against the growing threat of zero-day attacks. In 2016, AutoNation deployed Zscaler Cloud Sandbox, which enabled enterprise-wide protection against advanced threats. The company was looking for a solution that would be deployed quickly, with in-depth reporting, and Zscaler Cloud Sandbox proved to be more effective—and more cost-effective—than the hardware alternatives.

The Zscaler platform includes native SSL inspection and AutoNation is gradually rolling it out across the organization. "About half our stores are now using SSL interception and we expect to have that rollout completed within a few months," notes Johnson. "Some retail applications don't play well with SSL inspection, so we had to ensure we didn't interrupt any operations."

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“The visibility and control offered by Zscaler allows us to make smart policy decisions that improve our users’ experiences while allowing us to ensure we are appropriately managing our risk environment.”

Ken Athanasiou | Chief Information Security Officer, AutoNation



## THE DIRECT-TO-CLOUD™ EXPERIENCE: DEPLOYING OFFICE 365 IN 290 LOCATIONS

AutoNation was facing a challenge familiar to many organizations today: bringing the benefits of Office 365 to its widely distributed employees throughout North America. AutoNation had already established Internet points of presence in all retail and corporate locations, which enabled AutoNation to successfully deploy Office 365 and ensure a fast user experience while delivering consistent security.

The use of Office 365 results in long-lived connections—12 or more connections per user—so it puts a considerable strain on traditional networks and can quickly exceed firewall capacities. Zscaler eliminates these problems and ensures a fast user experience through peering with Microsoft in major data centers and through bandwidth controls that allow you to prioritize Office 365 traffic over other traffic, like streaming media.

In addition to deploying Office 365, AutoNation is rapidly establishing an eCommerce presence using cloud providers such as Azure and Amazon Web Services (AWS). The company acknowledges that it is moving to the cloud very quickly, migrating from physical data centers and on-prem hardware. Zscaler has provided a robust platform for enabling this transformation.

“The support organization that Zscaler has put together is outstanding. Response to reported issues is quick, and support personnel are extremely knowledgeable regarding the service.”

Jeff Johnson | Director of Security Operations, AutoNation

### About Zscaler

Zscaler helps leading organizations transform from the old world of IT, which focused on securing the internal network, to the world of cloud and mobility, where the Internet is the new corporate network. Its flagship services, Zscaler Internet Access and Zscaler Private Access, create fast, secure connections between users and applications, regardless of device, location, or network. Zscaler services are 100% cloud delivered and offer the simplicity, enhanced security, and improved user experience that traditional appliances or hybrid solutions are unable to match. The Zscaler cloud secures all the traffic for thousands of organizations in over 185 countries, applying policies and blocking threats millions of times every hour. Visit [zscaler.com](https://www.zscaler.com).



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