Zscaler™ and SICK AG: Cloud Implementation With Vision

SICK
Sensor Intelligence.

SICK AG
www.sick.com

Location: Waldkirch im Breisgau, Germany

Industry: Manufacturing

Products: Zscaler Internet Access™, Zscaler Cloud Firewall, Zscaler Cloud Sandbox

As a global leader for sensors, systems, and services for industrial automation technology, SICK offers its customers intelligent solutions for Industry 4.0 and uses the cloud for more than just its product range. Since 2015, cloud-based security through the Zscaler Zero Trust Exchange™ has been foundational for SICK's successful digitisation. Based in Waldkirch im Breisgau in Southwest Germany, SICK AG has an international presence with more than 50 subsidiaries and approximately 10,000 employees.

Sensors are omnipresent in the automotive manufacturing, aviation, transport, food packaging, and recycling industries. With sensor intelligence, SICK enables Industry 4.0 processes and creates solutions for the safe and efficient control of operations, protecting people from accidents and avoiding environmental damage. Today, data recorded by sensors is often exchanged via the cloud. Five years ago, SICK turned to the cloud to drive digitisation and modernise its IT security, creating a cloud-first network architecture.

Web security as the pioneer of digitisation

When SICK stopped using its existing security hardware in 2015, Ralf Busch, Manager of Technical IT Security Management, and Sven Hinze, Inhouse Cyber Security Consultant, set a course for the future by deploying Zscaler's cloud-based internet security. Since the existing four internet gateways in Europe, Asia, and North America were a limiting factor for a cloud-first infrastructure, the IT department took advantage of the Zscaler cloud proxy to pave the way for secure internet breakouts at each location. Each time SICK rolls out a new cloud application, Mr. Hinze gets validation for his decision. "Not a month goes by in which we are not certain that starting our digital transformation with security was the right thing to do."

> " We began our own digitisation process with a focus on security and now benefit from cloud-first infrastructures with every new rollout. "
>
> – **Sven Hinze**
> Inhouse Cyber Security Consultant
> **SICK AG**

SICK has already seen MPLS cost savings and less time spent on maintenance and will continue to see improvements with ongoing implementations of cloud-based collaboration tools. "With Zscaler we avoid the complex and manual administration process," says Hinze.

Higher levels of security from the cloud thanks to SSL scanning

The 2020 State of Encrypted Attacks report describes the situation clearly. Within one year, the number of threats concealed in SSL-encrypted data traffic increased by 260 percent. "Companies that do not fully scan encrypted web traffic for malware are simply turning a blind eye," explains Hinze. "I would recommend that all companies use SSL scanning these days. It's only thanks to Zscaler that we can see which threats are being blocked in the Zscaler cloud."

When SICK evaluated Zscaler in 2015, it involved the works council (employee representatives that act similarly to unions) from the outset. This ensured that the concern for data protection was addressed and aligned to a high level of security. After learning about the privacy protection for logs in the German data centers, the data protection officer was also on board. Everyone who was brought in by SICK during the evaluation was impressed with the technical capabilities of the Zscaler Zero Trust Exchange.

SICK has added more Zscaler functionalities to support its growing portfolio of cloud-based sensor solutions. "The Cloud Firewall gives us the option of applying very granular rules. This is important for our users so that they can communicate securely with sensors via protocols that have not been inspected by the web proxy, and it also adds extra security," says Hinze.

SICK AG BY THE NUMBERS:
- 8,000 users secured
- 210 TB of traffic processed in a quarter
- More than 40 internet gateways worldwide

Increased operational efficiency

Central security management via the Zscaler cloud platform has made the IT team's job much easier. Hardware administration is a thing of the past, as are maintenance weekends and network downtime. Mr. Hinze appreciates the flexibility this has brought the company: "We no longer have to worry about hardware or wiring. Instead, we can concentrate on providing a service to our internal customers."

According to Hinze, the Zscaler team provided great commitment and support during the entire cloud migration project. "I would like to particularly highlight the team's customer focus, as I have seldom experienced such professionalism. The Zscaler team is always there to support us with its expertise," says Hinze.

The cloud's sustainability

Reducing the ecological footprint of its IT department is part of SICK's corporate philosophy. Therefore, sustainability was also an essential factor for SICK when selecting a security partner. Currently, 89 percent of the power required by Zscaler to inspect data traffic for SICK comes from renewable sources.

About Zscaler

Zscaler (NASDAQ: ZS) accelerates digital transformation so that customers can be more agile and secure. The Zscaler Zero Trust Exchange, a SASE-based platform, is the world's largest inline cloud security platform, protecting thousands of customers from cyberattacks and data loss by securely connecting users, devices, and applications over any network. Learn more at zscaler.com or follow us on Twitter @zscaler.