

SD-WAN, an End-End Security Fabric, and the Blaze Private Core Network deliver a secure, reliable and agile network for depots and remote workers, UK-wide.

We build the network.
You grow the business.

CHALLENGE

As a leading supplier of agronomy advice, seed, crop protection products and precision farming services to farmers across the UK, and working in partnership with arable, fruit, vegetable, horticultural and amenity sectors, [Agrovista](#) operates predominantly in rural or remote locations. The company's network of 24 storage and distribution centres, Agrovista head office and data centre needed a private network with reliable and secure connectivity. Of particular importance was the need to better support a largely mobile and remote workforce with a secure VPN and improved endpoint security, as was the need to work with a managed service provider able to respond quickly to changing needs. Overall, Agrovista's existing MPLS network and existing service provider was struggling to deliver - and a more solid foundation for future network evolution was needed to support the business.

SOLUTION

A co-managed private network was created based on [Fortinet's SD-WAN](#) technology and Security Fabric platform. A fully integrated technology stack has been provided, covering firewalls, switches, and wireless infrastructure across Agrovista's office and depot locations. Professional project management by Blaze ensured a smooth deployment across all Agrovista sites.

All Agrovista locations are directly connected back to Blaze Networks' secure [Private Core Network](#), with limited traffic going over the public internet. In some cases, alternative internet providers like StarLink were used to provide better internet access at Rural locations. SDWAN technology and security allowed Blaze to deploy and secure these connections with ease.

Each site has a FortiGate firewall, sized appropriately to the location and available connectivity, while direct connection and the use of SD-WAN enables the centralisation of Unified Threat Management (UTM). Running UTM on the Blaze Private Core Network both saves expense and provides enhanced security by reducing Agrovista's cyber-attack surface on the public internet.



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All locations are connected via a primary and secondary connection through a combination of leased line circuits, FTTC, Broadband and 4/5G (dependent on the number of staff, site location and service availability). The datacentre firewalls are connected back to Blaze's core network on uncontended and dedicated 1,000 Mbps connections.

Secure connection of remote workers is supported into the Blaze Private Core Network infrastructure through use of Fortinet's ZTNA (Zero Trust Network Access) solution that is incorporated in the Fortinet endpoint management services technology (FortiClient EMS).

The Fortinet EMS security management solution enables scalable and centralized management of multiple endpoints. FortiClient EMS is designed to maximize operational efficiency whilst providing better visibility of what business assets are connecting into the network remotely.

As well as providing remote user connectivity, EMS was also configured to provide remote web filtering so devices are protected when outside of the secure network and computer telemetry that further strengthens the Fortinet security fabric capability by sharing device information with the rest of the integrated security infrastructure.

Two factor authentication (as required from most security related frameworks like ISO 27001, Cyber Essential Plus and the PCI-DSS framework) is provided, as well as additional capabilities as detailed above.

Enhanced security technologies protect the Agrovista infrastructure and branch locations, including:

- UTP (unified threat protection)
- Antivirus
- BOT Net detection
- IPS (Intrusion Prevention Services)
- Application Control

Content Filtering integrated with Active Directory provides user level identification and co-management access is provided through Blaze Networks TACAS platform and change control systems.



Use of the Blaze Private Core Network allows Blaze to host integral elements of the solution including FortiAnalyzer and Fortinet EMS on a high availability basis through Blaze Cloud.

[Blaze Cloud](#) is a hyperconverged network infrastructure owned and operated by Blaze, and based on the latest enterprise software technology from Microsoft. Blaze Cloud allows Blaze customers to have an exceptionally low-cost entry point while using such advanced enterprise hosting technology.

FortiAnalyzer is a powerful log management, analytics, and reporting platform that provides organizations with a single console to manage, automate, orchestrate, and respond, thereby enabling simplified security operations, proactive identification and remediation of risks, and the complete visibility of the entire attack landscape.

Blaze adds further to FortiAnalyzer in the Blaze Security Analyzer solution. This enhances customer value by supplementing FortiAnalyzer with add-on services which would normally be chargeable through standard Fortinet licensing methods, but which are provided without extra charge as part of Blaze Networks' Security Analyzer solution. These add-ons include Indicators of Compromise (IOC) and Security Operations Centre (SOC) and these services are used to provide a greater level of value and protection to Agrovista.

All Fortinet equipment in Agrovista's SD-WAN sends logs back to the Security Analyzer which then provides comprehensive reporting and security operation functions. Blaze has tailored this to Agrovista's reporting requirements and provided training to the IT team on reporting and security operational functions available within Security Analyzer.

AI (Artificial Intelligence) is used from FortiGuard to help combat virus outbreaks or ransomware using IOC (Indications of Compromise) licenses. As with content filtering, a co-management approach has been adopted and Blaze works directly with the Agrovista IT team (both teams have the same level of system access and information available to them).

This transparent approach allows teams to work together to isolate and secure the network from threats - as and when they occur - aligning with Agrovista security framework and incident management requirements.

RESULTS

The SD-WAN-based network design and combination of features provide Agrovista with a robust, secure and future-proof network in a highly cost-effective manner.

Reliable and robust network connectivity is being provided, and Agrovista's disaster recovery (DR) strategy has been enhanced.

By using application-aware SD-WAN technology and application health monitoring, Blaze can automatically failover the traffic in the event of service degradation on the primary fixed line service. Use of SDWAN-enabled active / active paths and application steering over both the primary and secondary connections enabled more productive network utilisation as well as enhancing resilience.

Provision of services to remote locations and mobile workers has been made much easier and a secure, capable, and resilient remote access infrastructure has been provided for mobile workers.



[Cybersecurity](#) has been enhanced by the network design and by the UTM system providing antivirus, content filtering and web filtering.

Overall, through an efficient and secure network design, combined with the enhanced level of service delivered by Blaze, Agrovista has been able to improve the reliability and effectiveness of its wide area network whilst boosting cybersecurity and simplifying operations.

Alastair Battrick, Senior IT Manager, Agrovista commented:

"Blaze has created a high-availability SD-WAN network which greatly assists the secure provision of IT services to our many remote locations and workers. The co-management of the network works well and Blaze is highly responsive to our needs."

"Blaze has provided a flexible and easy to adapt network, and their responsiveness and customer-focus makes the company very easy to work with."

"I'd personally like to thank the team at Blaze Networks for the smooth transition from our previous MPLS provider, and the reliable service they are providing us."

www.agrovista.co.uk

If you'd like to see how Blaze Networks could future proof your network needs, give us a call today.

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