

City of Aurora's Security Posture Starts with its People

Proofpoint email solutions empower and engage city employees in the fight against cyber threats



THE CHALLENGE

- Stop phishing attacks and floods of spam
- Significantly improve the city's security posture
- Increase security team's expertise

THE SOLUTION

- Proofpoint Email Protection
- Proofpoint Threat Response Auto-Pull
- Proofpoint Targeted Attack Protection
- Proofpoint Email Data Loss Prevention
- Proofpoint Email Encryption
- Proofpoint Internal Mail Defense

THE RESULTS

- Stopped targeted ransomware attacks and reduced spam and bulk mail to zero
- Gained comprehensive visibility into email threats for the first time
- Increased citywide engagement and support of cybersecurity through real-life education and awareness
- Grew security team's knowledge, expertise, and confidence

The City

Known as the Gateway to the Rockies, Aurora, Colorado, boasts spectacular views of the Rocky Mountains. Aurora is the third-largest city in Colorado with more than 381,000 residents. When Tim McCain was hired as the city's CISO, he and his team found themselves besieged by phishing attacks. Before they could focus on implementing risk-based governance and building security operations, they had to reclaim hours of time being spent on email attacks and cleanup.

The Challenge

When McCain arrived, he recognized the opportunity to make a significant difference in the city's security posture. City employees were Very Attacked People™ (VAP) and a large, ongoing target for attackers. Email is the leading threat vector across organizations of all kinds. He knew he had to address both at the same time.

The city had added a competing security product to its Office 365 deployment, but attacks still occurred regularly, and internally generated spam was still overwhelming. Worse, the team had limited visibility and fragmented event data. That hindered its ability to improve defense and response. For each incident, investigation through the vendor portal could take several days and still not deliver meaningful answers. Meanwhile, incidents continued and spread.

"Low security efficacy and visibility are bad for any organization," McCain said. "But the real problem is how attacks affected our people. Our team needed new skills and expertise to fight effectively. The last thing the city needs is a cyber attack. We needed to defend city employees and services for the community, as well as empower and energize our team."

The Solution

The security and infrastructure teams evaluated a number of secure email gateway solutions. After running a proof-of-concept (POC), they felt the choice was clear.

“Proofpoint’s level of professionalism, technical ability, and understanding of our needs was way above other vendors,” McCain said. “They made the POC easy and answered every question we asked. They even answered questions we didn’t think to ask.”

The City of Aurora chose a comprehensive Proofpoint solution.

Email Protection protects users against malware, impostor emails, and stopped the flood of spam almost overnight. If emails are poisoned after delivery or use evasion tactics, Threat Response Auto-Pull (TRAP) enables McCain’s team to automatically pull them out of users’ mailboxes—even if they were forwarded to other employees. Targeted Attack Protection (TAP) proactively stops advanced threats before they reach users’ inboxes, including zero-day and emerging threats. In addition, the TAP Attack Index identifies the city’s most attacked people and surfaces targeted ransomware attacks. With Email Encryption, users can now encrypt email messages with a click, enabling the city to more easily meet a wide range of compliance requirements.



“Proofpoint enables us to successfully address the issues at the very heart of risk—people and email.”

Timothy McCain, Chief Information Security Officer, City of Aurora

“Proofpoint immediately gave us optics into email threats that we never had before,” McCain said. “We know who our VAP are and can reach out to each individually. One employee was specifically targeted by a ransomware campaign, which Proofpoint caught. He was one of only 300 individuals Proofpoint has ever seen targeted by this type of attack.”

Empowered and Engaged

McCain’s team is taking on a security operations role with the help of the Proofpoint dashboard and support. It is doing deep dives into incident data. It is proactively preventing spam flare-ups. In the past, if an employee was victim to a phishing attack, it could take the team hours or even days to fully clean up the environment. Since deploying Proofpoint, the city has seen these spam flare-ups reduced to nothing. In fact, it rarely needs to use Proofpoint TRAP anymore.

“Ironically, Proofpoint is a victim of its own success,” McCain says with a laugh.

The Results

“Proofpoint’s ability to make security real enables us to engage everyone—from city leadership on down,” McCain said. “My team’s confidence has grown, and now they feel like ‘CyberCSI: Aurora,’ which is great.”

McCain said he can’t overstate the value of Proofpoint solutions and regular business reviews with his Proofpoint account team. Proofpoint is always available as the team gains leading-edge security knowledge and experience, giving them confidence. The city plans to integrate Proofpoint intelligence with its SIEM solution—ahead of the original plan.

“Proofpoint enables us to successfully address the issues at the very heart of risk—people and email,” McCain said. “Their support is amazing. I can say without hesitation that Proofpoint is an unequivocal success.”



LEARN MORE

For more information, visit [proofpoint.com](https://www.proofpoint.com).

ABOUT PROOFPOINT

Proofpoint, Inc. (NASDAQ: PFPT) is a leading cybersecurity company that protects organizations' greatest assets and biggest risks: their people. With an integrated suite of cloud-based solutions, Proofpoint helps companies around the world stop targeted threats, safeguard their data, and make their users more resilient against cyber attacks. Leading organizations of all sizes, including more than half of the Fortune 1000, rely on Proofpoint for people-centric security and compliance solutions that mitigate their most critical risks across email, the cloud, social media, and the web. More information is available at www.proofpoint.com.

©Proofpoint, Inc. Proofpoint is a trademark of Proofpoint, Inc. in the United States and other countries. All other trademarks contained herein are property of their respective owners. [Proofpoint.com](https://www.proofpoint.com)