HCT Reaps Rewards of One of the Largest Academia-Based IT Security Solutions in the Middle East Region

Leading Education Institution Hails Efficiency and 24/7 Security of Endpoint Protection Strategy Powered by Symantec

The Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) today revealed it has been defending staff, faculty and students from potential cyber-attacks via the one of the largest, most comprehensive academia-based IT security solutions the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has ever seen.

The UAE's largest higher educational institution is currently safeguarding more than 18,000 students from a barrage of increasingly potent and sophisticated virus and malware threats across 17 colleges throughout the country. Designed and implemented by data storage experts Condo Protego using Symantec Endpoint Protection, the project was rolled out last year after HCT management called for a centralized protection strategy to protect the nationwide institution from the UAE's rising tide of cybercrime.

"Targeted Internet security threats are on the rise," said Johnny Karam, regional director of Symantec, Middle East and French Speaking Africa. "We commend Higher Colleges of Technology for protecting its more than 24,000 endpoints and adopting a strategy to ward- off future risks and attacks by implementing Symantec security solutions. HCT has also implemented a faster, integrated disaster recovery system for a more holistic approach to information protection through Symantec NetBackup appliances."

According to the Symantec Internet Security Threat Report Volume 17[1], the number of malicious attacks continued to skyrocket by 81 percent globally last year. In addition, the report highlights that advanced targeted attacks are spreading to organizations of all sizes, data breaches are increasing, and attackers are focusing on mobile threats. The report also highlights the United Arab Emirates as a highly spammed country with a spam ratio of 73.0 percent and ranking 46th for overall malicious activity globally.

"Cybercrime has been on HCT's agenda for a long time now so we have put measures in place to pre-empt worst case scenarios and mitigate the threat in the best, most efficient manner possible," said Dr. Peter Heath, CIS Academic Division Head, HCT.

"We are delighted with the results so far. Everything is centralised and connected, with no single college operating in an 'at-risk silo', resulting in a more secure environment for learning and yielding significant operational cost-savings. If there's a virus or malware incident, we can instantly react before it becomes an issue. Another positive project

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[1] Symantec Internet Security Threat Report, Volume 17, April 30, 2012

outcome is that students can now travel freely between campuses without having to reconfigure their protection systems with each trip."

In addition to masterminding the project, Condo Protego ensures that HCT enjoys comprehensive post-sales support, including 24/7 cover and a 30-minute response time. This also includes managing the updates for Symantec Endpoint Protection, which encompasses network, file, reputation, behavior, and repair layers of defense to provide rapid and effective protection. Among the solution's unique selling points is its ability to draw on the collective wisdom of 200+ million systems and over 3.1 billion files to block new and unknown malware.

Symantec NetBackup appliances help HCT reduce overall complexity of managing its growing volume of information, while driving down the total cost of ownership through an integrated software and hardware solution that removes the burden of having to manage compatibility across software and hardware from multiple vendors. NetBackup appliances allow HCT to quickly deploy Symantec technology, such as deduplication and cluster file system, to reduce the impact of data growth in the fastest deployment model possible.

HCT is also collaborating with Symantec to provide students with an opportunity to develop skills in the information security field through the establishment of a Symantec Technology Centre of Excellence located on HCT campus. The lab is equipped with Symantec security solutions to cooperate on the development of courses that will help educate and train students about Internet security and the solutions to protect against these increasing security threats.

"HCT is really leading by example here," said Savitha Bhaskar, General Manager, Condo Protego. "Protecting data in today's education sector is a huge challenge, with students using numerous devices for both work and play. This is a particular problem at a vast, multi-site institution like HCT, and it is to their enormous credit that they have chosen to tackle the problem head on through placing information security and data protection at the very heart of their day-to-day operational strategy."

Condo Protego is one of the Middle East's most experienced Symantec partners. In 2011, Condo Protego achieved Symantec Master Specialization in all four Availability specialization areas, namely Archiving and e-Discovery, Storage Management, Data Protection Plus and High Availability. Condo Protego was the first partner in the region to have passed the rigorous quality control processes and trainings to achieve Master Specialization and currently is the only partner in the United Arab Emirates that has achieved Master Specialization. Symantec Master Specializations recognize partners who exhibit consultative and technical support expertise. Through these specializations, Condo Protego is well positioned to meet the evolving professional services needs of its customers and to provide its customers with a broad range of flexible service offerings on Symantec's product portfolio.