



Customer-at-a-Glance

Multinational educational group
Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

Industry

Education

Number of Staff

10,000-plus staff
25,000-plus students across multiple
campuses

Website

www.manipalglobal.com

Sophos Solutions

Sophos Endpoint Protection Advanced
Sophos XG Firewall
Sophos Access Points
Sophos Server Protection
Sophos RED

Sophos Customer

Since 2002

Simplifying End User and Network Security in Education

Multinational educational group teams with Sophos to unify its security solutions



'The 3S Mantra - Simplicity, Security, and Sophos has given me, my team and the Manipal Group peace of mind when it comes to securing the Group's network and endpoints from advanced cyber threats.'

Anil Kulkarni
AGM, IT
Manipal Group



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Challenges

- › Increased security risks for data leaks and other malicious activity due to the proliferation of end user devices
- › Lack of network, endpoint, and server visibility and control across multiple locations
- › Need to secure Wi-Fi access for users and protect Wi-Fi network from unauthorized devices
- › Use of multiple antivirus solutions across separate locations/campuses/offices caused management and control complexities
- › Fragmented and growing attack surfaces made it difficult to secure organizations against ransomware and other advanced malware attacks
- › Need to enforce uniform and advanced security policies cross branch offices and ensuring business continuity
- › Unreliable and unnecessarily complex security infrastructure
- › Evolution of distributed cyberattacks that cannot be addressed by legacy IT security systems
- › Unnecessarily complex security deployment and management across offices to remove delays, configuration errors, improve incident response, remove inefficiencies, and achieve consistent security policies

Solutions

Established in 1953, the Manipal Group is a privately held conglomerate with business interests in education, healthcare, and research. It has offices across India and multiple locations throughout the globe.

Its presence across different business domains means the organization caters to the needs of an eclectic target audience, including students, patients, doctors, banking customers, research scholars, and more.

The organization is growing at a rapid rate, and the size of its network is increasing in proportion to that growth. Coupled with the growing number of endpoints in the organization and exponential expansion in volume of critical data, the Manipal Group was looking to further strengthen its cybersecurity posture as well as guard its network perimeter and endpoints from advanced cyber threats like ransomware and other targeted attacks. The sheer complexity of its network, coupled with the increasing number of connected devices and widely distributed office locations, meant it wanted to work with a security vendor capable of delivering comprehensive network and endpoint security. Sophos, with its next-gen portfolio, was perfectly placed to address the Manipal Group's security challenges.

What kind of IT security challenges does a multinational conglomerate face?

Anil Kulkarni, AGM IT at the Manipal Group, oversees the Group's IT infrastructure across its different offices. It's his job to keep the organization safe from cyberattacks. He believes that the bigger the organization, the larger its attack surface, which can be exploited by attackers to get into an organization's network. For him, it's not only the Manipal Group's extensive internal and external IT infrastructure that forms the attack surface, but also the proliferation of endpoints that are a natural consequence of an organization's growth.

The sheer size of the Manipal Group, the diversity of its businesses, its multi-location business structure, and the number of people who can access different corporate resources means Anil and his team have their hands full, ensuring the Group's sensitive data doesn't fall into the wrong hands or that a cyberattack doesn't disrupt the activities of the Group or a branch office.

"The Manipal Group network is extremely complex owing to the size and distributed nature of the Group's businesses. Also, there is a diverse group of users that can access the company's resources. We have a huge number of students who access the student network and numerous employees who access the Group's corporate network. The scale of the network means there is huge scope for attackers to launch an attack, exploiting a network or endpoint vulnerability. I therefore was looking for network and endpoint solutions that offer a comprehensive suite of advanced protection, drill down visibility of network users, advanced malware protection, and most importantly, were easy to deploy and manage," explains Anil.

What specific IT security concerns kept you awake at night?

As the AGM IT, Anil with his team handles a wide spectrum of IT activities that drive business continuity and ensure that the IT infrastructure across the Group is in step with its needs. He must focus on both the tactical and strategic aspects of IT, and it is the emphasis on achieving the strategic IT goals of the company that drives his need to continuously reinforce the Group's cybersecurity infrastructure.

"The Manipal Group is spread across diverse business verticals, and my biggest concern is that an attack that exploits a vulnerability in one vertical can impact the whole Group. For example, a vulnerability in a student's desktop can be exploited by attackers, and the subsequent data



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'I and my team are very happy with how Sophos has strengthened our cyber security posture. Potential security issues are identified before they become major concerns, which give us peace of mind confident in the knowledge that our network and endpoint security is in safe hands with Sophos.'

Anil Kulkarni
AGM, IT
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breach can have far reaching consequences across the Group. Apart from the usual concerns of loss of business resulting from the downtime, and reputational damage after the cyberattack, what also concerns me is loss of intellectual property resulting from a data breach," said Anil. "I wanted to address these concerns with a unified security solution that protected my Group's end users as well as the extensive network perimeter and servers. The key was that I needed to be able to deploy, control, and manage all my security solutions in a hassle-free manner and with as few IT administrators as possible, thus leaving me and my team time for other important IT activities."

How does a single vendor satisfy offer comprehensive and effective security to your organization?

For Anil Kulkarni, who coordinates all aspects of IT and security across the Group, security is a critical component of the Manipal Group's overall IT goals and plays an important role in driving the Group's growth story. Anil and his team want to build a multilayered, holistic security infrastructure backed by next-gen security solutions that did not have the limitations of legacy systems, had low bandwidth load, and zero downtime.

"The idea was to pick a security vendor that allowed us to adopt a more streamlined approach to security and whose solutions did not exist in silos, but communicated with one another for better and more coordinated defenses," said Anil.

How did you pick Sophos as the best security vendor to deliver on your security needs?

The Manipal Group became the first customer of Sophos Endpoint Protection in India back in 2002, when Sophos had just begun its foray into the Indian market. Initially, the Group deployed Sophos Endpoint Protection across many of its education campuses, but today the whole Manipal Group is protected not only by Sophos Endpoint Protection, but multiple units of Sophos XG Firewall, Sophos Server Protection, Sophos RED, and Sophos Access Points.

Clearly, Anil and his team trust Sophos to deliver on the Group's security requirements by keeping in step with the rapidly evolving threat landscape, and this is evident from Sophos' portfolio of powerful next-gen security solutions and the company's investment in research and development at SophosLabs.

"We went with Sophos because it is a leading provider of both end user security and network security. I was already impressed with Sophos' endpoint protection and its ability to secure our Windows, Mac, and Linux systems against malware and advanced threats, such as targeted attacks," Anil said. "After evaluating the security needs of my organization, when I decided to deploy firewalls at nodal offices, I evaluated the capabilities of the Sophos XG Firewall. Impressed with its dual antivirus engines, fast path packet optimization, user and app risk assessment, and full length on-box reporting, I had no doubt that it was best suited to address my network security needs. I am also migrating multiple CR appliances to XG. I signed up for Sophos RED to push security policies from nodal offices to the Group's branch offices, and deployed server protection to enhance data security."

All of these steps created a series of security solutions that worked together to keep the organization safe.

"At the end of the day, we saw a wonderful opportunity to combine next-gen endpoint and firewall capabilities to strengthen security across the Manipal Group. We needed a solution with centralized administration, one that would not place additional burden on our IT staff every time we added a new branch office, and Sophos delivered perfectly," said Anil.

How did Sophos deliver on your need for better end-to-end security?

The Manipal Group has trusted Sophos for more than a decade. Anil is impressed with Sophos' continued innovation on network and endpoint portfolios and the fact that the company's focus is not only innovation but also ensuring that a single product delivers multiple features and protects against increasingly sophisticated and complex threats.

"Sophos products solve multiple aspects of the security puzzle, offer enterprise-grade protection, and yet are simple to use and manage," said Anil.

To protect the massive number of endpoints across the Group, Anil deployed 10,000 Sophos Endpoint Protection user licenses, with anti-malware, malicious traffic detention, web filtering, crypto-ransomware protection, and exploit prevention capabilities, ensuring an attack will be stopped before harmful malware enters the corporate networks.

'The growing number of attack surfaces and the complexity of these attacks was a cause for concern for the Manipal Group, but with Sophos we know our cyber security infrastructure is capable of effectively addressing these threats, now and in the future. '

Anil Kulkarni

AGM, IT

Manipal Group

"One of the key advantages of Sophos Endpoint Protection is that it offers numerous default policies configured to balance protection, usability, and performance. Plus, it is quick and easy to deploy. The Manipal Group has an endpoint proliferation problem, giving me and my team sleepless nights," Anil said. "But Sophos Endpoint Protection blocks web and application exploits, dangerous URLs, potentially unwanted apps and malicious code from touching the Group's endpoints, thus give us peace of mind. My team can enforce web, application, device, and data policies with ease, as well as category-based web filtering on and off the corporate network. My team can also manage access to removable media and media devices, and restrict unauthorized data flow by using prebuilt or custom rules."

Anil has also deployed XG Firewall at two nodal offices and uses Sophos RED to extend a secure network to branch offices. He is also in the process of migrating multiple UTMs deployed across different offices to XG.



"The XG Firewall delivers all the features I need to protect the Manipal Group's network from ransomware and advanced threats, including top-rated IPS, advanced threat protection, cloud sandboxing, dual antivirus, web and app control, email protection, and a full-featured web application firewall. What's more, it automatically responds to threats and gives me and my team exceptional visibility into risky users, advanced threats, and much more across the student and corporate network," asserts Anil.

Anil and his team are extremely impressed with XG Firewall's included rich on-box reporting as it helps them keep on top of all network activities across the Manipal Group's vast, complex network. Also, the ability to apply bandwidth restrictions on a user, application, or a group of applications helps Anil prioritize bandwidth allocation and optimize its use for more productive activities. Pre-defined policy templates that help protect common applications easily and simply have saved the team a lot of time as well.

The Manipal Group was also looking for server protection, and Anil felt Sophos Server Protection was the perfect pick as its malware defenses did not sacrifice server performance.

"I am extremely satisfied with features like server application whitelisting, advanced anti-malware, and behavior analysis," Anil said. "My team and I were looking for a server solution that helped us set advanced policy-based rules that enable granular control of the server agent. Sophos delivers on this aspect perfectly."

How did deployment results wow you?

Anil is a longtime Sophos fan after the security vendor has delivered over a decade of reliable protection to Manipal Group.

"The ROI from the deployment of these security solutions surpasses business expectations and streamlines security. I don't think there is any other security vendor out there that is delivering this level of advanced security that is also so easy to manage," said Anil. "The deployment of Sophos security solutions has helped save 80-90 lakhs that would otherwise have been spent on complex deployment requirements and investing in more resources to manage the cybersecurity infrastructure."

Since the Manipal Group deployed Sophos security solutions, they haven't experienced a malware attack at any given point of time across the group. This has meant zero business disruption, better business continuity and more productivity. Anil has also saved a huge amount of IT man hours as Sophos products and solution take over the complexity, allowing teams to focus on other new initiatives.

What next?

"We are witnessing the rise of ransomware, phishing, cryptojacking, and advanced malware penetration techniques. To say that this is an alarming situation for the Manipal Group would be an understatement. We therefore want to further bolster our cybersecurity infrastructure with Intercept X and Sandstorm to add additional layers of protection. This is our future roadmap with respect to Sophos deployments at the Manipal Group," said Anil.

Learn more about the Sophos Partner Program

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