eurofunk
creating safety by technology

Eurofunk Adopts a New Strategy for Security and Usability

Headquartered in St. Johann in Austria, Eurofunk Kappacher GmbH (Eurofunk) is one of the largest system specialists for the planning, setup and operation of command centres and emergency call centres in the sectors of public safety and transport in Salzburg. With the aspiration to create a safer future, Eurofunk aims to be a 360-degree solution partner for every aspect of control center technology.

Industry
Business Services

Strategic priorities
• Intrinsic Security

• Network Security

Partner
Bechtle is a successful European IT service provider, helping clients future-proof IT architectures and implement cloud, modern workplace and security solutions.

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VMware Footprint
• VMware® NSX®

• VMware vSphere®

• VMware Horizon®

Eurofunk is a systems specialist for planning, developing and operating control and emergency call centres. For its customers, stable and secure system operations with the lowest possible maintenance downtimes are crucial. By deploying VMware NSX, Eurofunk was able to introduce a model with superior security and threat detection, while ensuring flexible service delivery and maintaining an optimal balance between security and ease of use. Today, Eurofunk is well-equipped to meet the growing demands of its customers across the public safety and transport industries—even as the world faces a global healthcare crisis.

A key player in ensuring public safety

Eurofunk is a central contact for the complete configuration of its customers' control centres from telecommunications to IT infrastructure. With its integrated command centre technology, Eurofunk collects, processes, and enriches a vast amount of information from a wide variety of communication and information sources, to make it available to their customers' mobile and central agents in the form of an information hub. With this hub and command centre technology, Eurofunk helps customers operate and coordinate their emergency services more seamlessly.

The breaking point: overloaded firewalls

In an industry where emergencies could mean life or death, Eurofunk customers expect constantly improving efficiency for zero downtime and utmost security. Eurofunk was keenly aware of the urgency to quickly digitalize its own systems to maintain service and security standards. Modernizing its systems became more critical when network traffic between workload-to-workload within its data centre—also known as east-west

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traffic—left the existing firewall at Eurofunk desperately overloaded and near its operational limits. Because the firewall was its original solution to data security, any potential compromise could have an impact on the quality of their service.

As Günter Grünwald, head of IT Core, explains, "We are known as an innovative company, so we had to respond fast and modernize our own infrastructure."

With its previous system, it was difficult for Eurofunk to adopt a Zero Trust strategy—an increasingly popular security approach for superior security and threat detection. It is an approach that blocks all workload-to-workload communication not explicitly permitted. It requires users, both inside and outside organisations, to be continuously authorized before being granted access to applications or data. Traditional perimeter protection and the firewall-based segmentation of VLANs were costly. Lastly, the massive IT silos—systems with no connectivity whatsoever—put an additional strain on their system, which was close to breaking point.

NSX combines security and usability

Prior to this deployment, Eurofunk had already been working closely with VMware for six years. Besides trust in their long-term partnership, Eurofunk chose VMware due to seamless support and the value of using a single vendor. Eurofunk system specialist teamed up with VMware and partner Bechtle IT-Systemhaus Österreich to map out a customized learning curve that would help them identify challenges and improve connectivity between the individual services.

Eurofunk committed to a soft migration to VMware NSX—a network virtualization and security platform that enables the virtual cloud network—which would not impair live operation.

"Our objective was for the people employed here at Eurofunk to not even notice the migration and be able to continue their work with no surprises," says Grünwald.

Extensive preparation and planning resulted in a smooth implementation and the migration was done gradually over two years to avoid any disruptions to critical services, starting from 2018 and concluding in 2020. During that time, it successfully plotted out a Zero Trust model for flexible service provisioning, and improved safety and usability. NSX therefore reduces the time to identify threats and improves overall operations.

"Based on comprehensive preparation and planning, the implementation of VMware NSX went smoothly. As a result, Eurofunk benefits from improved innovative virtualization technology," says Harald Schneider, solution architect, Bechtle IT-Systemhaus Österreich.

"We are now much more flexible, have greater operating stability and experience less downtime. We can roll out new systems in a matter of hours, which lets us respond to the fast pace required by our customers."

Günter Grünwald, Head of IT Core, Eurofunk


Seamless transition and maximum protection

Eurofunk was successful in its efforts to minimise disruption while it transitioned to VMware NSX. Grünwald says Eurofunk experienced success with the soft migration: "Thanks to VMware, we hit that target 100 percent."

The transition to VMware NSX allowed Eurofunk to connect and protect applications across their data centre, multi-cloud and container infrastructure and to deliver critical services more efficiently. VMware NSX Data centre even helps them reproduce the entire network model in software and provision any network topology in seconds. Ultimately, each individual workload receives exactly the protection it needs, and the resulting flexibility means that not all east-west traffic has to be routed via the centralized firewall which would bring the system to its limits like before. Microsegmentation across the central IT also reduces vulnerability.

"All network traffic had to leave the virtualized environment in order to route through the firewall via the core switch and then come back again. But now we can completely eliminate this detour," says Grünwald. "VMware NSX kills two birds—network administration and the firewall—with one stone. . . It also gives us the benefit of faster provisioning, improved throughput and a lower investment in the firewall. The burden on the firewall has been reduced by about two thirds. VMware NSX is definitely the right solution for us."

"This faster provisioning and improved throughput also allows Eurofunk to roll out new systems in a matter of hours now, letting the company respond to the fast pace required by customers," Grünwald says.

Notably, this deployment also supported its pivot to remote work when the pandemic hit. VMware NSX gave Eurofunk employees a stable and secure environment in which to work. There were no outages for services or redundant systems and there were no interruptions when switching between the office and home. This seamless pivot to remote work was also supported by VMware Horizon which provided a consistent and secure virtualized environment for apps and desktops.
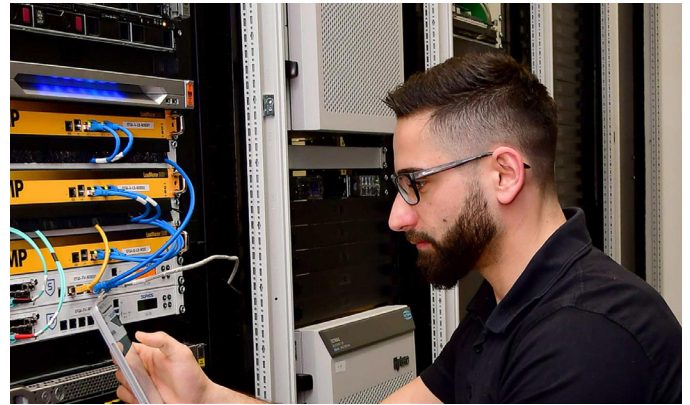
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Expanding remote development sites

As things stand, Eurofunk has 500 systems and 130 services in operation, and has been accredited in accordance with standards set forth by Germany's Federal Office for Information Security since 2020.

In the future, Eurofunk is considering implementing VMware SD-WAN to support more remote development sites and optimize services in the cloud.

"Our company's vision for our central IT landscape is simple: to deliver fast and reliable service to our customers in a flexible dynamic environment and we hope to continue striving for that goal with VMware," Grünwald says.