

BULLETPROOF 365E ENTERPRISE

CASE STUDY



City of Saint John
NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

MEET THE CITY THAT REFUSED TO PAY HACKERS

BACKGROUND

The City of Saint John is Canada's oldest incorporated city and the largest city geographically in the province of New Brunswick. The community, located along the Bay of Fundy on Canada's East Coast, is home to about 70,000 people. The City's 15-person IT team supports 900 users over the vast network of services needed by a thriving community: everything from development to parks to water to public safety services.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

On Friday the 13th of November 2020, the City of Saint John in New Brunswick, Canada, was hit by a ransomware attack, its IT operating environment held hostage for millions of dollars to be paid in Bitcoin. Even as the City was working harder than ever to deliver service during an unprecedented pandemic, the resolute municipality refused to submit to the demands to pay up. Instead, the City's IT team worked with Bulletproof to rebuild critical systems and re-engineer the City's cybersecurity posture.

CONTAINMENT

An immediate priority was determining the source of the breach. The City's IT team worked through the night to sever the City's internet connection and begin assessing the damage. They also alerted Bulletproof straightaway.

Fortunately, the City's existing contract with Bulletproof for incident response services meant that the team could engage immediately and assemble a team that met on site before 9:00 AM the next day.

A TIGHT TIMELINE

The City of Saint John IT department was determined to bring critical services back online in an ambitious six weeks, avoiding the months—possibly years—that building a new network might take. Upon arriving in Saint John, the Bulletproof team met with the IT Team to be briefed on the crisis and develop a plan of action. This involved bringing City leadership onboard, working with the City's executive leadership team to enact emergency procurement procedures, and ensuring crucial resources and services could be revived without delay.

GETTING SECURE

The City of Saint John has long had a concern for cybersecurity and the City's IT team had begun to implement a continuous security improvement program well before the 2020 attack. After evaluating its security posture after some earlier minor attacks, the City collaborated with a third party to complete a security assessment on its environment, leading its IT team to create updated policies. The City of Saint John IT department had further plans to expand monitoring to additional servers and user endpoints however, like municipalities everywhere, struggled for budget approval of cybersecurity solutions—often a hard sell for cash-strapped councils.

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THE SOLUTION

Working as a single integrated team, the City of Saint John's IT team and Bulletproof began to rebuild the City of Saint John operating environment, layering in security with the end-to-end Microsoft Security solutions stack. It deployed the Bulletproof 365 Enterprise system, which seamlessly merges Microsoft Sentinel with Microsoft 365 to deliver comprehensive intelligent security. Complete visibility throughout the rebuilding process was crucial as proving to stakeholders that the new infrastructure was well-protected was paramount.

Implementing the Microsoft Security stack was already on the City of Saint John's roadmap, so the Bulletproof team was able to swiftly rollout Microsoft Defender for Endpoint to secure the City's servers and other endpoints, Microsoft 365 Defender, and Microsoft Defender for Cloud.



THE RESULT

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Bulletproof's experts and the IT department at the City of Saint John, core network, including critical services, was up and running in six weeks—achieving their ambitious goal.

Now that the City's network and applications are safe and secure, its IT team wants to keep it that way. Thanks to Bulletproof 365E and the power of Microsoft Sentinel, the City of Saint John now has 24/7 monitoring and support; because after all, cybercrime never sleeps. The City's IT team and Bulletproof remain strong collaborative partners, meeting every month to review Microsoft Sentinel intelligence and strategize proactively. "It's a hard way to meet people," says the City's CIO, "but we have friends for life with Bulletproof."

"Now, we work on the assumption that we're being attacked all the time. Thanks to Microsoft Sentinel, we know that this is the case. The difference is that now we know that we can manage whatever happens through enhanced visibility and response capabilities."

— Stephanie Rackley-Roach, CIO, City of Saint John

"Bulletproof was our primary partner for containment and restoration. The attack impacted nearly every system."



SAINT JOHN

Stephanie Rackley-Roach
CIO, City of Saint John

ABOUT BULLETPROOF

Headquartered in Canada with locations across the United States and around the globe, Bulletproof has decades of technology, security, and compliance expertise, protecting its clients' most valuable assets. The company's footprint now includes users on six continents; trusting Bulletproof to secure their identities, networks, data, and devices.

Named Microsoft's global Security Partner of the Year in 2021 for delivering excellence and innovative end-to-end security solutions and five Microsoft Canada Impact Award wins from 2019 to present-day, Bulletproof is proud to be a long-standing Microsoft Gold Partner with twelve gold competencies, a member of the Microsoft Intelligent Security Association (MISA), and holder of the Microsoft Threat Protection Advanced Specialization.



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