



CASE STUDY: HILLARYS

OPENING THE BLINDS TO POSSIBILITIES

SECURELY TRANSITIONING TO AWS

Hillarys is the largest made-to-measure window dressings manufacturer in the United Kingdom. The company was launched in 1971 when Tony Hillary fitted his very first made-to-measure blind in Nottingham. Over its 45-year history, Hillarys has grown to three manufacturing centres that support three business channels; a consumer channel, a B2B channel of local providers and an e-commerce channel called Web-Blinds. Hillarys manufactures 35,000 custom products a week from blinds and curtains to carpets and awnings, employs approximately 1100 employees and works with over 1000 independent consulting advisors.

THE CHALLENGE: PROVIDING A HIGH LEVEL OF SECURITY WITH FEW DEDICATED RESOURCES

Hillarys began its move to the cloud in 2015 and chose Amazon Web Services (AWS) as their cloud platform. Motivating the push to AWS was their focus on improving the performance and stability of their environment.

As the online growth at Hillarys accelerated, increasing web traffic significantly, the need to improve the organization's security posture rose with it. Hillarys needed a comprehensive security solution that would provide state of the art cyber threat detection that included visibility into its AWS infrastructure.



HILLARYS

You'll love what we do

ABOUT

Hillarys has been helping make homes beautiful across Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland for more than 45 years.

SOLUTIONS

- Alert Logic® Cloud Defender® gives you a single solution to monitor the security of your infrastructure at the network, system, and application layer, whether it's on-premises, in the cloud, or hybrid.

Julian Bond, Head of ICT (Information, Communications & Technology) for Hillarys, explains that AWS requires a significantly different set of security protocols than is needed for on-premises security. For Bond and his team, the challenge was twofold:

1. to increase the level of security for the company's revenue-generating (or business critical) web technologies,
2. continuously maintain a high security level to stay ahead of the evolving threat landscape.

The nature of these challenges can be summarized as:

Providing full-stack security. When considering the transition to AWS, Bond did not have confidence that the incumbent security solution in place could meet the company's entire spectrum of evolving security needs because of security monitoring challenges and limited reporting capabilities. The existing security solution also generated a significant number of alerts, making it difficult to distinguish a real threat from a false alarm.

Small dedicated security staff. The Hillarys group online team employs approximately 15 web development staff with only two team members dedicated to maintaining the company's security posture. The move to AWS created a new set of security challenges different from on-premises security, making it difficult to cover the full stack of Hillarys security needs with an already overstretched small security team.

Meeting the demands of the boardroom. Boardrooms across all industries are taking a more vested interest in security measures and practices. Hillarys board members needed confidence that the company's sensitive data and intellectual property would be well protected in the cloud. "The move to AWS provided Hillarys with a platform to accelerate our business growth. But the board also wanted to be assured that we could provide full security coverage in the cloud," Bond said.

Unable to keep up, the organization was in a constant state of reaction with no time to proactively address security threats. To protect their data and accelerate online growth, it was evident to Hillarys that they would need to explore new security options.

THE SOLUTION: ALERT LOGIC SECURITY-AS-A-SERVICE

Hillarys needed to find a more comprehensive security solution that was purpose-built for AWS, would provide them with next level security to keep ahead of emerging threats, and scale to meet growing inventory requirements and an expanding partner network.

After a full evaluation of their options, Hillarys chose Alert Logic's managed Security-as-a-Service solution, a native AWS cloud security solution that would protect their web applications today, and expand to core mission-critical applications in the second phase of adoption. A successful experience with Alert Logic in another area of the company helped inform the decision.

With the Alert Logic Cloud Defender suite Hillarys can leverage Alert Logic's analytics and expert services to assess, and detect threats for their whole web application stack on AWS.

THE RESULTS: FULL STACK SECURITY COVERAGE

Proactive security with significantly lower overhead: Since making the transition to Alert Logic, Hillarys IT team no longer operates in a reactive mode. They now have a proactive security stance and the confidence to report back to the boardroom that the Alert Logic experts have security management covered across the entire web estate. The two IT staff members tasked with security management spend a mere 5% of their time reacting to only the high priority security incidents Alert Logic brings to their attention.

Only alerts on “real” threats: Alert Logic professionals provide Hillarys with continuous security monitoring of the threat landscape and real-time protection, 24/7/365. The team now has quantifiable data in an easily understood format to form a quick and effective response and remediate threats — preventing both known and unknown threats from causing serious harm.

Increased security and visibility: Hillarys sees great value from the Alert Logic full stack security and technology experts because they know they have a team ready to advise on next steps when needed. By improving the company’s visibility into the AWS landscape, Alert Logic Security Analysts reassure Hillarys they are up to date on security threats and their protection is fine-tuned.

A GOOD NIGHT’S SLEEP

Hillarys has moved from being highly reactive to security issues to highly proactive security management. They have confidence that their AWS infrastructure is safe in the hands of the Alert Logic security experts and can focus on growing their core business.

“APPROPRIATELY ADDRESSING THE EXPLOSION IN ONLINE THREATS HAS BECOME AN ‘ARMS RACE’, AND IT IS INCREASINGLY UNREALISTIC FOR MEDIUM-SIZED ORGANISATIONS TO RETAIN THE NECESSARY DOMAIN EXPERTISE AND BROAD EXPERIENCE IN-HOUSE. PARTNERING WITH ALERT LOGIC HAS ALLOWED HILLARYS TO FOCUS ON THE BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY ASPECTS OF ITS AWS ENVIRONMENT, BY PARTNERING WITH ALERT LOGIC’S FULL STACK CLOUD SECURITY CAPABILITY. WE SAVED THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS AND MANY HOURS EVERY WEEK BY CHOOSING THIS COST-EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGY WITH EXPERTS INCLUDED. ALERT LOGIC ENSURES THAT OUR CLOUD SECURITY EXTENDS BEING THE REACTIVE TO A TRULY PROACTIVE STANCE – ALLOWING US TO CONTINUE SUCCESSFULLY GROWING THE HILLARYS BRAND.”

- Julian Bond, Head of ICT

With Alert Logic, Hillarys security intelligence and ability to understand genuine security risk, saves time, money and resources and provides peace of mind. Says Bond, “The world never sleeps and we have customers ordering blinds throughout the night”

With the knowledge that Alert Logic is covering Hillarys security around the clock, at least Bond is now sleeping better at night — even when his customers are not.