

AT&T Cybersecurity helps strengthen New Castle County's security posture

Solutions

- AT&T Cybersecurity Program and Policy Development
- AT&T Cybersecurity incident readiness and response playbook creation
- AT&T Cybersecurity incident readiness and response tabletop, technical and executive level exercises

Highlights

- AT&T Cybersecurity delivered a formalized incident response plan with a comprehensive and effective playbook
- This partnership helped to raise awareness about the importance of incident response and the potential impact of cybersecurity incidents
- Understanding the different roles each team member plays in responding to an incident
- Showcases the value of AT&T Cybersecurity's expertise, knowledge, and insights in helping structure and implement a robust cybersecurity strategy

Overview

New Castle County in Delaware is the largest county in the state and is home to a little over 570,000 residents. The county's IT infrastructure is managed by a dedicated team, with a specialized subset of the team focusing on ensuring the security of their services. Their tasks included enhancing operational procedures and transitioning from legacy systems. This case study explores how AT&T Cybersecurity played a critical role in helping the county by assessing and testing its incident response plan, formalizing it, and providing expert direction for its implementation.

Challenges

The New Castle County IT team was focused on improving their operations, consisting of infrastructure, network, security, and migrations to the cloud. They were aware that such changes required the formation of official procedures and standards. At the time, the team had informal incident response plans in place, but this wasn't enough. Knowing the importance of a formalized incident response plan, New Castle County sought expert help in developing, documenting, and testing the plan.

In their interactions with other counties and municipalities that had recently undergone operational enhancements and digital transformation projects, New Castle found that AT&T Cybersecurity played a crucial role in incident response planning, as well as testing and validating these plans. Although other service providers could potentially offer similar services, the county wasn't certain if those providers could match the value that others had experienced with AT&T Cybersecurity. The positive reviews from other counties about the value and expertise AT&T Cybersecurity delivered greatly impressed them.

Upon contacting AT&T Cybersecurity, New Castle County was able to quickly work with AT&T's consulting team to understand the county's existing security framework and pinpoint the need to create a formal, tested incident response process, procedures, and playbook. The AT&T Consulting team's broad range of knowledge and skills left a favorable impression on New Castle County.

“The technical diversity and skill behind the AT&T Cybersecurity team was impressive.”

Michael Hojnicky

Chief of Technology & Administrative Services of
New Castle county

“We went with AT&T Cybersecurity because I knew they would deliver the same level of benefit and value other counties had received.”

Michael Hojnicky

Chief of Technology & Administrative Services of
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Solution

The development of AT&T Cybersecurity's incident response program encompassed the formulation of processes, procedures, and a playbook. This comprehensive development equipped the county with detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to react to specific types of cybersecurity incidents. They helped the county prepare for various scenarios, from a minor incident to a major attack, ensuring that everyone knew their roles and responsibilities during an emergency. This program helped improve communication and coordination between the different teams and stakeholders involved in incident response, as well as the efficiency and speed of those teams to respond quickly and efficiently helping reduce the potential impact and downtime.

“Quality of expertise and the thought process going into it, was much appreciated and that’s the kind of thing of people want to hear and see and to look for in working with. It’s a breath of fresh air.”

Jon Yearly

Deputy Chief of Technology of New Castle County

Once the county had a formalized plan in place for specific incidents, they were able to put those plans to the test with AT&T Cybersecurity tabletop exercises. They performed these assessments at two separate levels. The first with their technical team, and the second with their executive levels. Tabletop exercises helped validate the effectiveness of their incident response playbook, allowing the various teams to walk through the response procedures in a controlled environment and identify any gaps or weaknesses in the plans. This helped raise awareness about potential threats and educated all participants about correct procedures and responsibilities during an incident.

New Castle County was impressed not just by the wide range of technical skills that AT&T Cybersecurity showed, but also by the breadth of experience, and knowledge they demonstrated. The valuable insights and deep questions they asked the county made New Castle’s IT team think hard about how they would handle different situations.

Conclusion

AT&T Cybersecurity played a pivotal role in enhancing the cybersecurity readiness at New Castle County. Guiding the county through their incident response plan and providing a comprehensive, step-by-step playbook to prepare the county for various cyber threats, as well as running tabletop exercises helped them to achieve a formalized, well-structured incident response plan. Now, each staff member knows what their job will be if there’s a problem, staff are able to react more quickly and effectively than before, lowering the potential damage and the time systems might be down in the event of an incident.

“We needed a coordinator, we needed a game plan.”

Jon Yearly

Deputy Chief of Technology of New Castle County