



Murat Aksu
Operations Manager

The acquisition of SecurActive Solutions is a worthwhile investment as it helps us to diagnose network and application incidents!

About Centre Alexis Vautrin



The Centre Alexis Vautrin is a non-profit organization providing public healthcare services; it belongs to the French federation of anticancer centers - UNICANCER. It is the only hospital in the region Lorraine that concentrates its medical and paramedical activities to diagnose and treat cancers.

It exists by and for all patients of the area, with activities such as care and clinical research, but also for the general public through concrete actions like prevention, testing, research and teaching operations.

The Centre Alexis Vautrin employs more than 650 people and works closely with other healthcare organizations in the area (public hospital, general hospitals and private clinics) in order to provide support to cancer patients. The Centre Alexis Vautrin IT team (14 people) manages the entire IT activities for the organization and for the Jean Monnet hospital's radiotherapy department located in Epinal. This represents more than 900 IP addresses that is to say 650 workstations, 130 printers and copiers, 150 servers (70% virtualized) gathered in 2 data centers connected by two 10 Gbps links.

1 - What were the main reasons for buying SecurActive's solution?

M. Aksu, IT operating manager says: « We acquired a first appliance in 2007 for bandwidth analysis because we were recasting our network. We wanted to analyze connection issues and slowdowns. At that time, we had to two separated networks and we had the project to connect them together to perform a better load distribution by creating logical partitions (6 VLANs). For this, we had to review our addressing plan and rationalize our switches. The network infrastructure recasting was designed to improve our backbone and our network performance. We had no tool providing us with a clear vision of our network traffic. Thanks to the SecurActive appliance, we identified with ease issues related to bandwidth usage and discovered in few clicks the traffic flows in our network. In this way, we were able to adjust and validate our infrastructure choices. »

M. Aksu: « In 2010, we acquired a second appliance (Performance Vision) which allowed us to analyze network and application performance. Indeed, we had few anomalies that we had to solve urgently in order to improve the end-user quality of experience. One of those anomalies was linked to the access to the individual medical files applicaton from our remote site in Epinal.

Despite having set up a secured link of 20 Mbps, practitioners had to wait 20 minutes to obtain information regarding patients. After a deep analysis of application, security and network layers, Performance Vision allowed us to identify in few clicks that the root cause came from our VPN client. From now, practitioners have access to their patient information without any difficulty which gives them satisfaction. »

« Globally, we have acquired SecurActive's solutions, because they allow us to have a great visibility of our network infrastructure and we are now able to measure the performance of our critical applications. In addition, we were impressed by the solution's philosophy: to be precise, the way you navigate from dashboards to detailed information in 3 clicks » adds M. Aksu.

2 - How do you use Performance Vision?

M. Aksu: « Performance Vision helps us create our network map and identify protocols which were running in our network bandwidth but also solve network and application performance issues. We use SecurActive probes for multiple uses. ***In fact, when we are facing an issue regarding a user, we use SecurActive probes either to diagnose an application performance issue or a problem linked to bandwidth. In few clicks, we know if the slowdown comes from the server, the workstation or our network.***

We recently implemented a DMS application (Document management system). The implementation is part of a larger project called PICSEL (« Plateforme d'Informations et de Communication en Santé Et Logistique »).

The objectives of the project are to:

- Make available a medical folder containing all documents related to a patient, viewed on a computer, to all employees involved in providing care; in other words, create a digital medical files for each patient.
- Deploy a digital dictation; that is to say, handle mail dictations via an electronic way.

During the DMS implementation, we have scanned all relevant documents for each patient so that they are accessible by any authorized employee, via a web portal. We chose to deploy the DMS application on a n-tier architecture, namely a web server, a virtualized application server and a database server.

Once we launched this new application, we received many users' complaints. Actually, the data display was very slow (approximately 20 seconds) while our network is powerful (100 Mbps). We tried to find out where the root cause of the slowdown was by talking with the software provider. Given the fact that the discussion was too difficult with them was quite unproductive, because they only suspected our virtual server and our network performance, we decided to launch deep investigation with our Performance Vision probe.

We have easily identified that our connection time was excellent (~100 ms); however the response time associated with the server (SRT – Server Response Time) was of approximately 10 seconds. This is unacceptable for an application as critical as this one. We also discovered that the application was querying the database every second and was consuming over 1 Mbps of bandwidth. Once provided with this information, the software provider has recognized the issue and corrected the software code. On our side, we have optimized the web portal by developing new features with a much more performing data access. Now, our users have access to data in less than 2 seconds. Without the SecurActive probe, we would never have been heard by the software vendor!

On a daily basis, many SecurActive features allow us to solve issues and improve our end-user quality of service. As an example, we have noticed that few servers were misconfigured by using ICMP and TCP errors tables. Thanks to the network view, we have also redefined backup schedule time for our mail servers. Moreover, the DNS requests tables have provided us many interesting pieces of information and helped us to improve our DNS configuration. It has significantly improved the performance of our internet access. »

3 - Who is using SecurActive probes in your team?

M. Aksu: « SecurActive probes are used by our CIO and myself. We use probes on both aspects: applications and network flows, and also in the area of application performance and troubleshooting »

4 - After a few months of use, how do you evaluate SecurActive solutions?

M. Aksu: « We have used SecurActive probes for several years now and are very pleased with them. SecurActive probes help us to follow carefully the implementation of applications internally. For more efficiency, I recommend to install SecurActive probes close to the servers and / or the faulty equipment. ***We really appreciate the philosophy of the two products, that is to say the ability to navigate from management dashboards to detailed***

information in a few clicks and identify easily the root cause of a slowdown or degradation. In most cases, we had the opportunity to discuss with our suppliers based on tangible and reliable data.

The acquisition of SecurActive solution was a worthwhile investment, as it helped us to solve network and application issues while improving our IT team productivity and the end-user satisfaction.

5 – What are our upcoming projects around SecurActive solutions?

M. Aksu says: « We are still working on the various components which will constitute the electronic medical file, therefore the SecurActive solution will allow us to better control the risk attached to this deployment. **Next year, we have planned to start a VoIP project and we are convinced that this solution will help us to size the necessary bandwidth to host this new technology on our network. So we can set up the VoIP universe and control the quality of service of VoIP.** Currently, our main concern is to follow the scalability of our electronic medical file project. Consequently, we scheduled a day with a SecurActive certified engineer in order to improve my knowledge regarding network and application performance analysis.»