



Sophos Cloud Optix gives confidence around security and compliance for health data research at **HIC**, part of the **University of Dundee**

The Health Informatics Centre (HIC) at the University of Dundee specialises in the provision of secure data collaboration to facilitate cutting-edge medical research. The Centre holds consented health data on roughly 20% of the population of Scotland, spanning a time period of around 30 years. Data governance and security is critical to their successful operation. HIC has recently expanded its Data Centre from on-premise to also include the cloud in order to take advantage of leading technologies that the cloud can provide.

CUSTOMER-AT-A-GLANCE



Health Informatics Centre (HIC)
at the University of Dundee

Industry
Education and Research

Number of research projects
120

Sophos Customer
Since 2020

Sophos Solutions
Sophos Cloud Optix
Sophos Phish Threat
Sophos Intercept X for Server

“We wanted to take advantage of leading cloud technologies to advance health research projects, while upholding stringent governance and compliance with our existing and ongoing information security standards.”

Ian Fletcher, Information Security and Governance Manager, HIC

The Health Informatics Centre (HIC) at the University of Dundee extended its data centre into an AWS public cloud environment in order to utilise leading-edge technologies such as AI, Deep Learning and Machine Learning and advance the research projects it supports. As a custodian of health and sensitive data, HIC needs to ensure that it has the right security in place to safeguard the critical data that it manages. Read on to find out why HIC chose Sophos Cloud Optix and the benefits it has provided.

Business challenges

HIC has a delegated authority from the NHS and Scottish Government to manage the use of health data for research. It exists to provide a Trusted Research Environment (TRE) to enable teams to carry out cutting-edge research by accessing health data in a secure environment. Historically it has hosted over 700 projects on a secure Dundee-based on-premise data centre, however with the advancement of cloud technology, the team at HIC sought to access the benefits which the cloud could provide. Naturally, significant focus was required in terms of security and compliance when shifting aspects of the TRE online.

Ian Fletcher, Information Security and Governance Manager, joined HIC to lead the project to extend its data environment to the cloud. After successfully completing a proof of concept, Ian needed to find

a cloud-based product that would complement HIC's existing suite of solutions, while ensuring governance and compliance with standards such as ISO 27001 (which HIC was already accredited with).

A key challenge for HIC was how it could establish a public cloud-based TRE with equivalent security and protection to an on-premise environment. Ian and the HIC Infrastructure team sought to achieve this by building a hybrid cloud solution, an innovative and ambitious project and one of only a very few similar projects within the UK, at that point in time. Given the sensitive nature of the data HIC manages and since it is a charitable organisation, Ian needed to find both a dependable and a competitively priced solution to support the project.

Top priorities for the chosen solution were integrating with the products and services which HIC already had in place, and optimising additional time spent by IT engineers to oversee and ensure suitable cloud activity.



“We had Cloud Optix under extensive evaluation for three months. I knew Sophos security products and services were very strong from previous experiences, and that, of course, turned out to be true for Cloud Optix also.”

Ian Fletcher, Information Security and Governance Manager, HIC

Ian was already certified in four other Sophos products and familiar with further Sophos solutions, but had not yet worked with Cloud Optix. He was keen to find out more about it and how it could help HIC with this new project.

The technical solution

Since HIC already had some Sophos products in place, Ian reached out to their Sophos account manager to enquire about Cloud Optix. He explained that HIC had a large cloud project coming up and needed a security software service to wrap around it and ensure suitable cloud posture at all times. Sophos responded by providing a three-month Cloud Optix evaluation period free of charge, which enabled HIC to trial the solution without any undue pressure. During this time, Ian and the HIC Infrastructure team undertook extensive

evaluation of several other options available on the marketplace but opted for Sophos Cloud Optix in the end as the best product to complement its existing suite of solutions and current/future use-cases.

Business benefits

Ian explains the benefits of installing the Sophos Cloud Optix service solution alongside its other suite of products, saying: “I think one of the key benefits for HIC is the ability to apply consistent ‘guardrails’ within the AWS environment to ensure compliance with our required information security standards. HIC is ISO 27001 certified, a Data Processor for very sensitive NHS data, and is externally audited twice a year as part of that ISO 27001 process. With Cloud Optix, we can be confident that we are in constant compliance. We also have peace of mind that with Cloud Optix’s proactive 24/7 monitoring in place, we

would be alerted should any activity deviate from our applied security standards, and any issues flagged to us quickly.” Ian lists further benefits as being:

- Confidence around data security and the ability for HIC to safely access new and innovative technologies within the AWS cloud environment
- Integration with Sophos Central and other products to provide a ‘one-stop-shop’ to monitor the security status of the entire IT infrastructure environment
- Easy integration with solutions from vendors other than Sophos, as appropriate
- Time savings and an improved experience for IT infrastructure engineers by monitoring activity through a ‘single pane of glass’

- › Oversight of spend and activity in the cloud on a project-by-project basis enabling the optimisation of cloud costs
- › A very intuitive and operator-friendly interface
- › A trusted cloud security posture at a very competitive price
- › Excellent 24/7 support from Sophos and great support too from their Sophos account manager in Scotland

HIC purchased a three-year Cloud Optix licence to cover the entire predicted AWS workload moving forwards, and Ian has been very pleased with the onboarding process and the functionality of the product so far. He is confident that Cloud Optix will help HIC far into the future, enabling the organisation to work with new and emerging technologies. In turn, this will enable researchers to access and mine the complex datasets they need to progress such cutting-edge health research projects for the greater good of us all.

About Sophos and AWS

The security posture management and compliance provided by Sophos Cloud Optix makes it straightforward for HIC to keep data secure while simultaneously blocking threats.

As an AWS Security Competency-approved, AWS Level 1 Managed Security Service Provider and AWS Advanced Technology Partner, Sophos protects more than 100 million users from today's most advanced cyberthreats and is helping to build secure and scalable cloud transformations with AWS.

The Sophos unique approach fuses automated protection across endpoint, cloud workloads and networks, with 24/7 managed threat response services to create a single cybersecurity package to secure data, proactively prevent vulnerabilities and block advanced threats.

Learn more at sophos.com/aws-mssp

“When we decided to purchase Cloud Optix, the support from Sophos was excellent. We had a product onboarding afternoon with two Sophos Professional Services engineers and that helped to enable our Infrastructure team to quickly learn about the solution in practice. Sophos has always been quick to respond and help with any related queries and further information for both this and our other software purchases from them.”

**Richard Walls, Business Development
& Relationship Manager, HIC**

To find out more about Sophos solutions, call (0)8447 671131 or email sales@sophos.com