

# Telecom Egypt secures its IT and network infrastructure with TippingPoint



## CASE STUDY

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Telecom Egypt

**Country:**  
Egypt

**Industry:**  
Telecommunications

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### Background

With more than 150 years of operational history, Telecom Egypt is the largest provider of fixed line services in the Middle East and Africa with 11.7 million subscribers, as at the end of December 2008. Telecom Egypt currently controls Egypt's only fixed line network, servicing both retail voice and wholesale demand for reliable telecommunications connections. The company also currently participates in the mobile segment in Egypt via its 45% ownership of Vodafone Egypt, one of the three existing Egyptian mobile operators. Through its internet subsidiary, TE Data, Telecom Egypt has more than 50% market share broadband internet access in Egypt as at end of December 2008.

### Challenges

As one of the telecommunications market leaders in the region, Telecom Egypt owns and operates state-of-the-art IT infrastructure and network covering of all Egypt's Governorates serving its subscribers. Telecom Egypt's IT infrastructure includes hundreds of routers, switches, servers, and more than 8,000 computers.

"Securing Telecom Egypt's on-going operations and IT infrastructure is indeed a mission critical and a key focus area for the company's IT department," explained Ayman Ahmed, the Local Area Network Manager at Telecom Egypt. "Intrusion detection and prevention systems were deemed necessary to complement the IT security policy and provide a secure environment for the corporate core applications and infrastructure. Our objective is to protect corporate mission critical applications as well as our IT infrastructure at Gigabit speeds through total packet inspection."

### Solution

Different products were assessed, as part of our evaluation process. The Telecom Egypt team was impressed with TippingPoint Intrusion Prevention Systems' (IPS) features when compared with other products we evaluated. Our evaluation was based on the following criteria:

- Blocking attacks and allowing Telecom Egypt's IT staff to test security patches before deployment.
- TippingPoint's Digital Vaccine filters alleviate the need for ad-hoc and emergency patching.
- Most environments cannot control all end user desktop PCs. TippingPoint provides network segmentation to stop the spread of malicious traffic from infected users, while notifying the administrator where the attacks are originating from.
- Blocking malicious traffic and rate shaping rogue applications can increase bandwidth availability by 40-70 percent.
- By continually cleansing the network of malicious and unwanted traffic, network performance is accelerated for mission critical applications.



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When evaluated against other competitive products, TippingPoint gave the best TCO (Total Cost of Ownership) and value proposition. Telecom Egypt is a process centric organisation and had a well defined implementation plan. Multiple work streams were run in parallel to minimise business impact and avoid any service disruption. The main challenge was the downtime of the network. Given the size and scope of the change, the implementation team had to execute diligently yet with quality, with a rollback plan always at hand as a last resort.

The team had to work out of office hours and followed innovative plans to manage the implementation of the project. All the work was completed within a night and everything was back online before the start of the next business day. As a result of the thorough planning and quality execution, the team didn't face any problem whatsoever and the project turned out to be a great success and was appreciated by the corporate senior management.

### Result

Through its infrastructure protection capabilities, the TippingPoint IPS (Intrusion Prevention System) protects Telecom Egypt's data centres, network infrastructure including routers, switches and other mission critical infrastructure from targeted attacks and traffic anomalies. "The new system also enabled to throttle non-mission critical applications that hijack valuable bandwidth and IT resources, thereby optimising the network resources and enhance the overall performance of applications," added Ayman.



Ayman Ahmed

Khaled Marmoush, the Chief Information Officer at Telecom Egypt reiterated that most organisations aren't equipped to monitor the changing threats in the wild, analyse the data and revise security policies in a timely manner. "TippingPoint IPS gives our IT team the ability to anticipate threats and adjust our IPS policies based on our network security requirements. With TippingPoint, we can now eliminate malicious traffic from the network, manage non-mission critical application usage, ensure protection against subscriber-to-network and subscriber-to-subscriber attacks, and implement new and value-added services, confident that our security and network performance is assured," Marmoush explained.

According to Ayman, Telecom Egypt's next plans include working on a centralised management system for the IPS units. "This will enable discovering, monitoring, configuring, diagnosing and reporting on multiple TippingPoint systems. While that is being worked on, we are targeting to scale our security systems, by deploying core controller to enable automated, in-line 10Gbps inspection, thus protecting network devices, operating systems and applications from various security attacks. This will also balance traffic inspection loads across multiple IPS units, allowing Telecom Egypt to effectively use only the amount of IPS capacity required," concluded Ayman.