

CASE STUDY Local Government

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Ransomware Containment



Ricoh helps the Town of North Andover Ward Off Ransomware Attacks

About the customer

The Town of North Andover is located in Essex County in the northeastern part of Massachusetts about 25 miles from Boston. It presides over all public services for nearly **30,000** residents as well as **6,000** students that attend five elementary schools, a middle school, a high school and a technical school. North Andover's public services include full-time police and fire service, street maintenance, snow removal, a public library, youth services, a senior centre, public health, building services and business development.

Challenges

- Increasing ransomware attacks throughout Massachusetts and the U.S.
- Costly, concerning ransomware attack at a neighbouring town
- Risk of losing data and forfeiting taxpayer dollars to recover data
- Desire for a centralized ransomware solution to easily deploy to **900** town and school staff and **6,000** students



"We went with Ricoh because there wasn't anything else out there that can do everything RansomCare can do."

CASE STUDY - LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Town of North Andover had managed to avoid a ransomware attack, but they knew it was only a matter of time. A neighbouring town wasn't so lucky and bad actors took their municipal network down for a whole week — forcing the town to hand over taxpayer dollars to recover their data. Equally concerning, news of ransomware attacks were increasing throughout Massachusetts and the U.S. It was time to act.

John Hyland, the Director of Information Technology for North Andover, began exploring solutions to protect against a future ransomware attack. They had antivirus software and a good firewall, but he knew it wasn't enough.

“This was one of the easiest setups of all time. We just needed a standard Windows server and BullWall jumped on and configured RansomCare in 20 minutes.”

John Hyland,
Director of Information Technology
at North Andover

The Director was looking for a solution that didn't require loading software on every single device. With **900** town and school staff and **6,000** students, that would be an arduous, time-consuming task. Instead, Hyland wanted a centralized solution that would offer the greatest protection and an easy implementation.



Results

- Cost-effective solution that's a fraction of a typical ransomware payout
- Peace of mind that data is protected from bad actors
- Eliminated the need to purchase ransomware insurance

For a fraction of the cost of a typical ransomware payout, North Andover has the protection they need to detect and contain any future attacks on their network. They also have peace of mind knowing that their data won't be accessed by hackers and data criminals. The Ricoh solution also prevented the town from having to purchase ransomware insurance.

Hyland and his team don't have to touch the solution — it runs independently once in place. They are also able to share data from the solution with the Town Select Board to demonstrate improvements in public safety and school data practices. In addition, they were able to share peak data usage times at the schools, which was information the Town Manager found particularly useful. The Town Manager was so impressed with the solution that they now include it in their annual budget.



How we did It

- Proof of concept for ransomware detection and containment using Ricoh's RansomCare powered by BullWall
- Centralized, fast, remote configuration in just **20 minutes**
- Set parameters for acceptable network activity and suspicious activity
- Two installations of our solution for the town and the schools

Around the same time the neighbouring town had been hit with a ransomware attack, the Ricoh team connected with Hyland to discuss our detection and containment solution. He had only been working for the Town of North Andover for a couple of months, but was increasingly concerned that a ransomware attack could be imminent.

The Director attended a Ricoh webinar on our solution, RansomCare by BullWall, which convinced him to go forward with a proof of concept. To make the proof of concept happen at the Town of North Andover, the Director simply had to install a standard Windows server and add a few drives. From there, the BullWall team accessed the town's network remotely and had the ransomware detection and containment solution configured in just **20 minutes**. The town ran our solution in test mode for about two months to demonstrate how it would work in North Andover's environment. Hyland particularly liked that our solution could help protect classroom data in Google Workplace (formerly G Suite), which houses all of the schools' information.

During the proof of concept, the Director was also able to see any irregular activity on their network and set parameters for what was acceptable and what should be contained. For instance, some people were passing files with unusual extensions or doing partial downloads. Our solution flagged that activity and the Director was able to use the information to spur conversations with end users to better understand the behaviour.

Since RansomCare wasn't included in the current year's budget, Hyland secured emergency funds from the Town Manager. Well aware of ransomware attacks in the surrounding area and the growing risk to North Andover, the Town Manager wholeheartedly approved the additional expense. North Andover then proceeded to full implementation, with two separate installations for the town and schools.

See how Ricoh's [ransomware detection and containment solution](#) delivers peace of mind for the Town of North Andover or [contact us](#).