

# Connex cuts costs with flexible, reliable SonicWall solutions

By deploying SonicWall security platform, Connex Credit Union to save \$40K annually



## Customer profile



UNBANK WITH US

**Company** Connex Credit Union  
**Industry** Finance  
**Country** United States  
**Employees** 120  
**Website** [www.connexcu.com](http://www.connexcu.com)

## Challenge

- Unreliable connectivity and management of laptop and mobile device security
- Enhancing remote access service levels

## Solution

- SonicWall Secure Remote Access 4200
- SonicWall Network Security Appliance 3500
- SonicWall Email Security Appliance 300

## Benefits

- Clean VPN solution integrating SSL VPN with UTM
- Decrypts and decontaminates VPN traffic before it enters the network
- Enforced VPN authentication, data encryption and granular access policy
- Cleans inbound traffic for malware and verifies outbound traffic in real-time
- Enables secure business continuity during unforeseen disruptions

“SonicWall solutions keep us safe and secure from threats.”

*Michael Giorgio, Director of IT*

One of Connecticut's largest credit unions, Connex® Credit Union has 120 employees and serves more than 40,000 members at 7 branches throughout greater North Haven. Headquartered in North Haven, Connecticut, Connex is a full-service and member-owned credit union that offers a full range of financial services and products.

**The challenge: unreliable connectivity and management of laptop and mobile device security**

"I commute 150 miles a day, so I am a huge advocate for working remotely," said Michael Giorgio, director of IT at Connex Credit Union. "We needed to offer a simplified way for employees to work remotely."

IT had previously received complaints from executive staff and other mobile users about the difficulty of accessing network resources remotely. Connex users had experienced limitations in connecting to all of their servers over their VPN connections. It became clear that the credit union needed an easier and more reliable remote access solution.

Giorgio is not willing to sacrifice security over mobility. While security processes and policies are in place to manage the information that Connex employees save on their desktops at work, IT loses control when laptops and mobile devices leave the network.

"My biggest concern is the moment the user walks out for the day with their Connex-owned laptop," said Giorgio. "Once someone goes home with a device and we lose sight of it until the next day, we really don't know whether the user or their family members have used it to access dangerous web sites or download malware."

Connex required a comprehensive and secure remote access solution that could decontaminate remote traffic before it could enter the network. Previously, Giorgio deployed an onsite Check Point® unified threat management

(UTM) appliance to provide the credit union's gateway security. Unfortunately, the solution frequently dropped Internet connectivity.

"Sometimes outages would last an hour," said Mohammad Usman, network engineer at Connex Credit Union. "We couldn't afford that."

**The solution: SSL VPN integration with UTM**

Connex evaluated products from Cisco® and Barracuda® before selecting SonicWall Secure Remote Access (SRA) 4200, Network Security Appliance (NSA) 3500 and Email Security ES300 solutions. The SonicWall Clean VPN™ approach integrates SSL VPN with UTM firewall technologies to secure both VPN access and traffic. Connex purchased the appliances through SonicWall and employed a third-party service provider to help with the installation and configuration.

"Flexibility and cost were key decision factors for us," said Giorgio. "The SonicWall interface was so easy to navigate. Our SonicWall representative was able to provide us the appliances at the absolute minimum cost. As a credit union, every dollar counts."

"The SonicWall product is very user friendly," confirmed Usman. "It took about half an hour to get up and running."

Usman also benefited from attending SonicWall certification training. He has relied on SonicWall for assistance as needed. "SonicWall provides great support," said Usman. "I'm very pleased with their level of service."

"SonicWall will save us \$15,000 over the first year, and \$40,000 a year in annual operating costs within five years."

Michael Giorgio  
Director of IT

## The result: cost-savings, flexibility and reliability

Giorgio has seen significant business benefits in lowered operating costs, increased flexibility and greater reliability.

“By our projections, the SonicWall solution will save us \$15,000 over the first year, and \$40,000 a year in annual operating costs within five years,” said Giorgio. “That makes a huge difference to our business in today’s economy. Every dollar saved adds job security for our employees and increased services to our members.”

The solution has enabled IT to provide enhanced remote access for its users.

“Everyone is absolutely in love with how easy the SonicWall solution has made it for them to work remotely from home or on a business trip,” said Giorgio. “They just enter their password and for all intents and purposes, they’re back on our WAN, with everything working the way it did when they left the office. No remapping. No multiple configuration steps. It is as simple as it gets.”

Using the SRA 4200, Connex’ users are able to drop into their network on the same subnet.

“The SRA 4200 has been really helpful for us to troubleshoot remote connectivity and work on all of our servers. I stay connected remotely all day without ever dropping,” said Usman. “Our mobile users can reliably access their email and file shares remotely as if they were still on the network. As an added benefit, we get fewer related help desk requests.”

In addition, the solution integrated seamlessly with the credit union’s RSA appliance to authorize remote access over the VPN.

By integrating the SRA 4200 with the NSA 3500, Connex has also experienced greater reliability in its Internet availability.

“The NSA 3500 lets us automatically failover to a DSL backup immediately if our primary connection drops,” said Giorgio.

Giorgio planned the scope of his SonicWall deployment to future-proof his infrastructure for remote access on a global scale.

“Our SonicWall solutions keep us safe and secure from threats,” said Giorgio. “From a financial institution’s point of view, SonicWall’s vision and expertise in security is outstanding. I have great confidence in placing our reputation in their hands every day.”

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