






Gilbert improves cyber resiliency to better serve residents

Gilbert, Arizona, turned to Dell Technologies for an innovative, layered solution to ensure service continuity and protect data.



With an increasing number of government entities and businesses in Arizona facing threats of ransomware and other cyberattacks, the town of Gilbert chose Dell Technologies to help design and implement a sophisticated, multilevel solution to improve its cyber resiliency and backup and recovery capabilities.

Transformations

-  Employs a physically isolated, air-gapped vault to secure vital data that is segregated from the town’s network.
-  Delivers an increasing number of services digitally to meet citizen demands.
-  Provides the town’s IT team with insights for better decision-making through real-time dashboards and reports.

Customer profile



State and Local Government | United States

Outcomes



Safeguards sensitive resident data from cyberattacks and other threats.



Enables efficient, confident restoration should a ransomware attack occur.



Provides a single point of reference to monitor data integrity and safety.



Significantly shortens data backup and recovery times.

“There are so many things people love about Gilbert,” says Mary Goodman, assistant city manager for the town of Gilbert. “Every day presents new opportunities, but also new challenges. Our vision is to be the City of the Future, prepared for the next 5, 10 or even 100 years. To do this, we need partners such as Dell Technologies to ensure continuity of service for our residents.”

Governments have become frequent targets of cyberattacks designed to disrupt essential services for businesses and residents. More than 2,300 U.S.-based government agencies, healthcare facilities and educational institutions were hit with ransomware in 2021,¹ resulting in serious — and in some cases, life-threatening — issues.

For the town of Gilbert, the “largest town in America,” just southeast of Phoenix, Arizona, the answer was Dell PowerProtect Cyber Recovery, Dell PowerProtect DP series appliances and the Dell Data Protection Suite with Avamar.

Building layered data defenses

Anthony Bryson, Ph.D., chief information security officer for the town of Gilbert, explains how a layered defense plan can safeguard sensitive data on residents.

“We’re strategic in our thinking — we want to understand what the threat surface looks like and find the appropriate tools and partners,” Dr. Bryson states. “PowerProtect Cyber Recovery, with its air-gapped vault, is one of the best cybersecurity solutions. Our relationship with Dell Technologies made it easy to implement, quickly and painlessly.”

The solution isolates critical data from ransomware and other malicious schemes. Adaptive analytics and machine learning help organizations identify suspicious activity, recover known good data, and resume key operations and functions.

“PowerProtect Cyber Recovery protects us by making our key data inaccessible,” remarks Dr. Bryson. “By segregating from our network, the vault means attacks can no longer move laterally across our network to access this particular set of data.”

He continues, “If we ever had to rebuild our systems from bare metal, the solution gives us what we need to restore and get back up and running quickly. PowerProtect Cyber Recovery provides a level of cyber resiliency we’ve never had before.”

A key component of the town’s layered defense is CyberSense, which offers fully integrated, machine learning–based analytic algorithms and other capabilities to allow the town to monitor data integrity in the air-gapped vault and detect encryption, corruption, known malware extensions, mass deletions or creation of files, and more.

“CyberSense provides us that single point of reference to truly understand the current state of our data and know that we’re protected,” Dr. Bryson says. “It definitely enables us to get a good night’s sleep.”

Dr. Bryson and his IT team also appreciate how it’s a “set-and-forget” process with minimal administrative or maintenance demands, so the town’s security team can focus on more customer-centric security needs.

Delivering satisfying digital experiences

The town of Gilbert has invested a lot of time and effort into delivering high-quality digital experiences. Gilbert’s citizens are technologically savvy, and they expect an increasing number of services to be digital, according to Sasan Pouretezadi, chief technology officer for the town of Gilbert.



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Mary Goodman

Assistant Town Manager,
Town of Gilbert, AZ

¹ Emsisoft Malware Lab, “The State of Ransomware in the US: Report and Statistics 2021,” January 18, 2022, Emsisoft Blog. <https://blog.emsisoft.com/en/40813/the-state-of-ransomware-in-the-us-report-and-statistics-2021>

“Our IT vision is really aligned with the town’s goal, which is to continue to grow as the City of the Future,” comments Poureetezadi. “For example, we now offer online permitting through our EnerGov software platform. To deliver innovative digital experiences, it’s important to have partners such as Dell Technologies.”

The town also counts on Dell Technologies solutions to leverage virtualization to access data wherever it resides and gain insights through real-time dashboards and reports to make better decisions and enhance the services for citizens.

“What Dell Technologies brings to the table — R&D and other capabilities — helps us be more efficient and effective in delivering services at scale,” Poureetezadi says.

Improving backup and recovery

As part of leveraging Dell Technologies solutions “from desktop to data center,” Eugene Mejia, deputy chief technology officer for the town of Gilbert, discusses how the town has seen a solid return on investment from its PowerProtect DP series appliances and Avamar data protection software. Gilbert’s DP4400 appliances provide one-stop data protection through replication, deduplication, and instant access and restore.

“We get faster backups and better use of staff time and resources while validating that our information is protected with Avamar and the DP series,” says Mejia. “We were able to easily integrate Avamar into our existing solution and really expand and scale our systems.”

He continues, “We’ve seen an improvement in our backup and recovery times as well as greater efficiency requiring less storage, which is a huge win in terms of consolidating racks and shrinking our data center footprint.”

Productive partnership

Dr. Bryson concludes by summing up how the town works closely with Dell Technologies: “We view our relationship with Dell Technologies as a true partnership. They are as invested in our success as we are. They listen and make it easy to design and ultimately implement the best solutions.



“Many organizations don’t consider the insider threat. We understand that a large number of attack vectors are internal, and we still have to protect against that. Cyber Recovery Vault is extremely important to us because it also helps safeguard against those internal threats.”

Anthony Bryson, Ph.D.

Chief Information Security Officer,
Town of Gilbert, AZ

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