In The Pocket
DIGITAL PRODUCT STUDIO

Client
In The Pocket

Industry
Digital services

Requirements
· Multi-office network connection
· Cloud-first approach
· Future-proof architecture

Technology needs
· Low latency for SaaS applications
· Connecting multiple locations
· Powerful hybrid work experience
· Secure access control
· Cloud-based network management
· Open integration for other technologies
· Scalability for future growth

In The Pocket installs future-proof network architecture with Aruba SD-WAN provided by Prodata Systems

As a fast-growing digital product studio with a cloud-first mindset, In The Pocket needed a modern and flexible network architecture that ensures seamless connectivity. The company recently opened a new branch in Antwerp, in addition to its headquarters in Ghent and an office in Leuven. Prodata Systems offered advice and implemented the complete setup with Aruba SD-WAN and Aruba Central. It provides In The Pocket with a scalable solution that supports the company's growth ambitions.

With customers in sectors such as life sciences, industry and fintech, In The Pocket specializes in end-to-end design and delivery of digital products. Their experts help companies stay ahead with services in cloud, machine learning, mobile, web and User experience. One well-known solution the Ghent-based studio has worked on, for example, is Payconiq by Bancontact; the app that paved the way for nationwide mobile payments in Belgium. "We currently have more than 200 employees working from home or one of the offices in Ghent, Leuven or Antwerp. The latter opened in early 2023 and fits into our strategy of being close to our employees and customers", says Louis De Jaeger, IT Lead at In The Pocket.

Of course, having multiple offices brings challenges in terms of network connectivity. For several years, In The Pocket has been working with access points and switches from Aruba. Whereas they previously relied on site-to-site connectivity with firewalls and VPNs, the new Antwerp office made things a lot more complex to manage. Therefore, long-term partner Prodata Systems advised the company to switch to an Aruba SD-WAN setup that meets the need for scalability, security and cost efficiency.

Cloud-first and best-of-breed
SD-WAN, or Software-Defined Wide Area Network, is quickly becoming a popular approach to manage more complex IT architectures. Multi-office and hybrid work environments such as In The Pocket's infrastructure require connecting different locations and allowing employees to collaborate without latency. One solution is to connect the WAN with an MPLS, but this can be very expensive and have a negative impact on performance. Especially as In the Pocket has developed a powerful cloud-based mindset. "We believe in a SaaS-first approach that allows us to scale and reduce our on-prem footprint. Moreover, we pursue a best-of-breed strategy where we integrate different tools", says De Jaeger.

Fast connectivity to multiple cloud providers, such as Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Google Cloud Platform, is guaranteed by the SD-WAN approach. A major advantage over an MPLS is the fact that local traffic flows directly to the cloud applications instead of having to pass through the data center at the headquarters, which would have a significant impact on latency.

"When working with SaaS applications and collaboration tools such as Zoom, people constantly want a fast network connection. Even a fraction of a second of latency can be very disruptive during a video meeting", explains De Jaeger. "In addition, we also need optimal connectivity to synchronize and use backups stored in the cloud."

The Aruba SD-WAN setup equips each office with a box connected to a central platform in the Ghent headquarters. The solution then builds and manages its own tunnels, eliminating the need for manual intervention. To ensure the best user experience, In The Pocket provides its offices with two internet lines from different providers. With SD-WAN, the platform monitors the speed of each line at all times and automatically chooses the fastest connection for a specific application.

PRODATA
SYSTEMS

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TRUST MANAGE CARE

Prodata solutions
· Aruba SD-WAN
  Edgeconnect Medium &
  2x Edgeconnect XS
· Aruba Central
· Aruba ClearPass
· +30 Aruba Access Points
· 6 Aruba switches

Prodata Systems services:
· High-level consulting
· End-to-end support and
  installation
· Single point of contact
· On-site assessment

Benefits
· Improved network performance
· Reduced reliance on physical
  infrastructure
· User-friendly setup that can be
  maintained internally
· Scalable solution for a rapidly
  growing business
· No vendor lock-in for any SASE
  or IAAS growing business
· Easy setup with templates for
  future branches
· Central monitoring &
  management in the cloud

Scanning the environment
In The Pocket's headquarters in Ghent are located in the trendy DOK Noord district, one of the oldest ports in the city. The company sits in a beautiful building with lots of concrete walls and windows made of UV-coated glass. Such a structure can have a negative impact on the network's performance, unless you take care of the right setup and configuration. Therefore, Prodata Systems first conducted a site survey to decide on the number and positions of the access points. Ultimately, more than thirty Aruba access points and six Aruba switches were installed at the three locations combined.

The biggest eyecatcher of the building is a large terrace where people can work on hot summer days while enjoying a beautiful view of the city. Since the Wi-Fi signal inside the offices is unable to cover the connection on this terrace, an additional outdoor Aruba access point was installed. This powerful device can withstand several weather types and temperatures; it also ensures the best user experience, even when a large group of people decide to work outside.

integration with Aruba gives us many opportunities for the future and prevents vendor lock-in", says De Jaeger.

Complete migration during office hours
The project at In The Pocket was completed in about three months. "During the entire process, we could count on a single point of contact at Prodata Systems. Thanks to good preparation together with our consultant, we have been able to complete the entire migration during office hours. "Prodata Systems was well prepared and did much of the work in the back-ground. They were often faster than we expected. It was definitely an advantage to work with a consultant who has experience with mission-critical infrastructures and a direct line with some of Aruba's top experts." The Aruba SD-WAN network has been running on all sites since April 2023. "The setup is user-friendly and allows us to maintain the network ourselves. This was also an important requirement in choosing Prodata Systems and Aruba technology. Of course, we still engage Prodata for major updates, but smaller daily changes can be done by our own IT team.
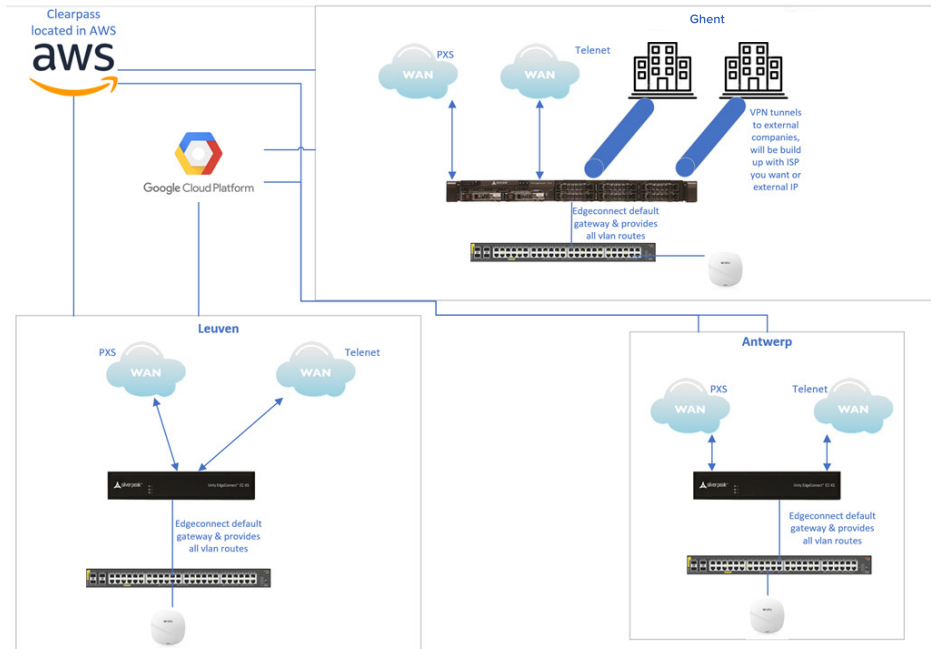
Open integration for future technologies
Along with Aruba SD-WAN, In The Pocket decided to implement Aruba Central. This solution ensures that Wi-Fi and switches in the offices are managed in the cloud rather than on an on-prem server. And to increase security in such a distributed work environment, they also migrated ClearPass to the cloud. ClearPass is another solution developed by Aruba; it allows users to securely authenticate, authorize and enforce network access control with role-based network policies based on Zero Trust.

Looking ahead, we want to take further steps toward Zero Trust and modern security frameworks such as SASE. The fact that most providers have open

In a nutshell, In The Pocket now has a solid basis for a secure edge-to-cloud networking infrastructure that meets the needs in terms of flexibility and performance. The solution can be easily scaled up as the company grows – for example, In The Pocket also has an office in Amsterdam to serve customers in the Netherlands and two upcoming studios in Lisbon and Bucharest. For each potential future office, it is enough to configure a box and connect it to the central platform. This usually does not even require a site visit. "We are very satisfied with our new architecture. Not only do our users notice a clear difference in performance, it also supports our mission to be less dependent on physical infrastructure", concludes Louis De Jaeger.

For more info visit our customer cases on www.prodata-systems.be/cases