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City of Las Vegas Makes Bet on Advanced Threat Protection Solution

Las Vegas leverages advanced threat protection solution to battle 'unsophisticated' threats that are growing in sophistication.

[Karen D. Schwartz](#) | Feb 13, 2019



When most people think about Las Vegas, they probably think of bright lights, fast action, glitzy shows and high rollers. When Michael Lee Sherwood thinks about the

Sherwood is charged with providing technology services for all 25 of the city of Las Vegas' departments, each of which is heavily reliant on technology to perform its mission. It falls to Sherwood's department to ensure that the city's systems and digital assets, as well as the personal information of citizens and visitors who [come in contact](#) with government, are well protected.

Sherwood's team takes the job seriously, proactively adding and updating [cybersecurity solutions](#) to the mix to try to stay ahead of new threats and new techniques by bad actors. Yet, despite the effort, the group has noticed a big rise in what Sherwood describes as less sophisticated attacks.

“We see a lot more attacks on email, especially phishing attacks,” he said. “You might call them unsophisticated, but the ruse of the emails is getting more sophisticated. The spelling mistakes and bitmapped logos are gone. We have had some very close calls with very unsophisticated approaches that have been sophisticated in their presentation.”

Because the city had experienced several close calls even with email screening tools installed, Sherwood decided to take a more layered approach to the problem, adding another tool that would add depth and breadth to the problem.

Sherwood settled on BitDam, an advanced threat protection (ATP) solution that uses different algorithms from secure email gateway solutions the city of Las Vegas already employs. BitDam's cloud-based technology helps detect and block known and unknown content-borne attacks before they reach users' mailboxes. According to the Tel Aviv-based company, it does this by learning the normal code-level executions of business applications such as Microsoft Word and Acrobat Reader, and determines whether a file or we blink is malicious based on that whitelist.

After a period of testing, BitDam is now fully functional in Las Vegas. Sherwood said that, so far, it's been effective, catching threats that may have fallen through the cracks otherwise. "It gives us a better idea of which tools are effective in specific areas, and when they work better together. It's helpful to have that verification," he added.

While technology is a critical part of keeping Las Vegas systems, departments, citizens and visitors safe, Sherwood believes [education](#) is even more important.

"It's the cheapest form of security, and it provides the best return," he said. "I don't believe we've done enough as a technology profession to educate. We're trying to remedy that by [educating our user base](#) in how they obtain email, interact on the phone and use technology services in general. It's about making them more mindful and sophisticated in their day-to-day operations."

Sherwood said that, in a way, it's the same idea as personal security.

"We've all been taught to lock our doors, for example. We should also be taught not to leave your computer logged on, to verify that you're communicating with the person you believe you're communicating with," he said. "These are the types of things technologists sometimes forget. We tend to put all of our faith in a technology solution and forget that our best line of defense starts with our user base."



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