



croix-rouge française

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Yves Couturier, CIO Executive France, French Red Cross

The French Red Cross Secures Life-Saving Information with Virtru

Croix Rouge, the French Red Cross, is an independent charity that provides humanitarian aid around the world.

An essential part of its work is the Restoration of Family Links, reuniting families separated by war, armed conflict, natural disasters, or economic crisis. Because the nature of its work involves managing highly sensitive information, Croix Rouge needs to safeguard communications from any unauthorized access, which could potentially endanger the individuals it seeks to protect.

Croix Rouge uses Virtru to:

- **Safeguard sensitive personal information** about individuals and families in potentially dangerous locations.
- **Make encryption easy** for employees and volunteers with a simple-to-use solution directly within Google Workspace, for desktop and mobile.
- **Add Zero Trust protections to sensitive files shared externally** with Red Cross sister organizations and other partners.
- **Shield data from cloud providers** for complete data sovereignty and control.
- **Manage their own encryption keys** to maximize security while leveraging the benefits of the cloud.

Reuniting Families through Secure Communication

Croix Rouge France is the world’s fourth-largest Red Cross organization, with more than 81,000 members across the country. Many families turn to Croix Rouge to determine the whereabouts of missing loved ones displaced from their homes, whether as a result of armed conflicts, natural disasters, economic crisis, or other emergencies.

To help locate missing people, sensitive data often needs to be shared with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as well as other Red Cross entities around the world. “It’s actually about 193 sister organizations, because there is no common management or governance between entities,” said Yves Couturier, CIO Executive France of Croix Rouge. “We are all independent.”

Because these Red Cross partners work so closely together, yet are all independent organizations, it’s vital that they have a way to securely share information with each other, in a way that ensures that data is only accessed by the intended recipient. Virtru’s encryption for Google Workspace allows the Croix Rouge to share data with the confidence that it remains fully under their control at all times.

Maintaining Data Sovereignty and Zero Trust Security in Google Workspace

Croix Rouge uses Google Workspace, but because the organization is based in France, it needs an additional layer of security to ensure complete data sovereignty and residency. With Virtru's encryption, Google cannot access Croix Rouge data. This applies throughout the data's full lifecycle – from the moment it's created through storage, collaboration, and sharing.

"The best of breed we found, from a technical point of view and a financial point of view, was Virtru," Couturier said. "The product has been rapidly and efficiently set up, and it has been very easy to explain to users. It's very easy, too, because it's integrated inside our Google Workspace environment – particularly Gmail, which is our corporate collaboration tool.

"By moving people to Google and pushing them to the native containers and to the native tooling from Google, we have also ensured a higher level of security from a file perspective, which is important."

Croix Rouge had several key criteria it needed to meet within Google Workspace:

- End-to-end encryption that would prevent cloud providers and unauthorized users from accessing its most sensitive data
- The ability to host its own encryption keys and maintain full control over data stored in the cloud, shielding data from its cloud provider, Google
- Complete data sovereignty and data residency to preserve individuals' privacy

The next step in Croix Rouge's Zero Trust data protection strategy is leveraging Secure Share, Virtru's encrypted file-sharing platform, to securely exchange files both internally and externally. This includes things like financial documentation, press releases, sensitive communications, sensitive HR data, and insurance information. Secure Share is designed to provide versatile, easy-to-use file sharing capabilities to facilitate the simple, secure sharing of this information. "We all think it's a necessity," said Couturier.

Easy-to-use Security for Desktop and Mobile

Because Croix Rouge collaborates with so many external entities, including other humanitarian aid organizations, ease of use is essential. With such a large volunteer base, many of whom are over 70 years of age, it's important that Croix Rouge's security solution was simple to use.

"We like the product, and we like the spirit of the product: Simple yet efficient. That's very important because we are not IT users. The job of the Red Cross is not to make IT, so you cannot assume that your users are IT geeks. They are not," Couturier laughed. "So, if you want the users to use the technology, you need to get a simple yet efficient product like Virtru with a simple click, an elegant pop up. Nothing complicated. So we are always taking care to balance security, efficiency, and simplicity."

By making secure collaboration easy, the organization is able to work quickly on its urgent mission, meanwhile securing the sensitive data being shared.

The mobile experience was also important to Couturier. "Many of our users are mobile-first users. And of course, we get exactly the same capabilities on the smartphones, working the same way as on desktop. And there is no difficulty to make Virtru run, even if it's a BYOD device, which we have a lot of. We have 6,000 corporate smartphones but also manage a bit more than 12,000 BYOD machines.

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**Yves Couturier, CIO Executive
France, French Red Cross**

About the French Red Cross

The French Red Cross, founded in 1864, is an independent charity working alongside governments and public authorities. It provides humanitarian, health, social, welfare and training services. Its team of employees and volunteers pursue consistent and unwavering charitable principles to provide local support and deliver tangible results and long-term solutions.



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