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Seclore enabled us to implement business rules

By CXOToday Staff, Dec 06, 2010 04:46 PM

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It is important for organizations from the digital content space to protect their data and IP. Cheers Interactive is one such organization, who in order to tackle this issue have deployed Seclore Filesecure. In an interview with CXOtoday, **Peter Ferrao**, VP systems and processes, Cheers Interactive and **Hitesh Shah**, COO, Cheers Interactive share their experience on the deployment of the solution.

When and what were the reasons for selecting an information rights management solution?

Hitesh Shah: We are in the business of servicing the knowledge industry, where we offer research, analysis and information related services to businesses, thereby producing a lot of digital content. Currently, most our clients are based out of western countries, where the NDAs are very stringent, so we not only need to secure the information we create, but also protect our IP. Additionally, in an industry such as ours there is a lot of people movement, so we also need to protect the content processed by people who have left the organization. In India, the laws are pretty much employee centric and our legal framework is not supportive if anything goes wrong in our industry.

So as we scale up, we needed a solution that enables us to concentrate on growing our business rather than worrying about information theft.

Peter Ferrao: Information security is vital for us, in terms of both client data as we sign strict NDAs and vital culturally and internal information, which is vital to manage competitive advantage. We were therefore looking at a solution that could protect the interest of the company and its clients, and yet impede minimally, if at all, with operations and business. Information, content and data had

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to be protected and yet staff needed to have the freedom to use information, content and data within a defined restricted environment but without restricting organizational efficiencies.

I think the primary need was to protect information which is accessible to the highly distributed sales team as well as information received from clients and protected under strict NDAs.

What was the selection process and criteria that Cheers followed before narrowing down on FileSecure?

Hitesh: We wanted to evaluate collaborative tools, which would enable sharing of information amongst people across the organization with certain restrictions in place. Also based on the nature of our business activities we had setup some business rules and Seclore was able to help us implement them.

Peter: The basic need for information security for internal as well as clients' sake was identified. Having identified the need there were multiple approaches which were identified out of which the two primary ones were Implement a method of centralization of confidential information i.e. where confidential information is stored in a centralized location and all access to it is controlled by a strict access control policy - This approach has many benefits but the primary reason we rejected this approach is because it was difficult of implement and forced users to change their behavior. Ad-hoc methods of collaboration like emails would need to stop in such a case. Secondly, implement a method of usage control by which information could still move freely but confidentiality is assured. This is where Seclore FileSecure came in and provided us with the difficult (otherwise) combination of security and collaboration.

The evaluation process followed was fairly strict. There was a technical Proof of Concept (PoC) in which the tech team evaluated all the features followed by a business PoC in which the business users certified the product for usability and then of course commercial viability. We started by evaluating 4 products across the different approaches and narrowed down on FileSecure

Were there any changes required with the IT setup prior to deploying the solution?

Hitesh: We understand that building too much security in any business process can lead to people not being able to functional at all. So we took a middle-path, where we implemented those elements from our wish list which were practical.

Peter: There were no technical "changes" required as such. The deployment of the solution required a "Policy Server" which in the case of Cheers is a separate machine and the installation of the solution desktop client on all computers. Initially we did not put the Policy server on the internet but later we became more comfortable and hosted the Policy server.

Changes required were more cultural and habitual. It was important to get the organization acclimatized with the 'change' in terms of what they could edit or view. Thankfully, Seclore

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Filesecure is user friendly and logical in its design. Moreover, they were very receptive to any minor changes requested technically to increase information security effectiveness and adapt within the organizations process realm.

Was the deployment done in phases? How was this planned out?

Peter: The deployment was not done in phases as we had spent a lot of time in the PoC phase to look at possible roadblocks etc. in the deployment. The deployment was done pretty much in one shot. Initially there were complaints by some users regarding system performance but most of these issues turned out to be software conflicts which were resolved by changing Active Directory group policies.

How much time did it take to implement this solution and were there any obstacles? Could you elaborate on them?

Peter: The software installation was done approximately in 10 days. After that for users to become aware and define policies and Hot Folders etc. took another few weeks and it was an iterative process in which the Seclore team helped us. Obstacles faced were really more in terms of user adoption. Every time a file is opened there is a screen which pops up informing the user of his rights for a particular document, this was new to the business users who wanted it to go away. After careful analysis of the IT act and consultation with the Seclore team however, we decided to keep the screen to ensure that users are aware of the policies.

Also initially there was no option to provide screen sharing rights to people i.e. while a protected document was open screen sharing tools like RDP, Go to meeting etc. were not operational and this was causing significant loss of productivity as our business relies heavily on these collaboration technologies. The Seclore team however later incorporated "screen sharing" as a separate right which could be assigned / revoked and therefore we could meet the collaboration needs also.

What are the future plans with respect to taking this solution forward in the organization?

Peter: The solution is up and running through out the organization and in key processes already. The future plan will be to increase the information security awareness outside of Cheers i.e. to customers, partners and employees and ensure that they use the technology properly.

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