Case Study

Healthcare Provider

As a healthcare provider, our customer needed to find ways to comply with the IT security provisions of the Healthcare Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The company selected Policy Commander® from New Boundary Technologies to manage its Windows security configurations and automate compliance.

Background:
With an eye toward meeting HIPAA data security requirements, the company evaluated its IT operations and environment to find the right technologies and processes that would help them succeed. By leveraging the automated enforcement functionality of Policy Commander, the company created a sustainable compliance environment that requires minimal administrator intervention.

Challenge:
Because securing electronic patient health information (EPHI) is a key component of HIPAA compliance, the company needed to find ways to secure all Windows systems that could access that information. This task was complicated by the fact that the organization has users across the country that require remote access to the network. In order to make those systems HIPAA compliant, the company decided to utilize the growing practice of security configuration management.

Environment:
The organization has a widely distributed network environment that encompasses a central office and hundreds of remote offices across the U.S. This includes approximately 600 remote users that use virtual private networks to connect with the main corporate network. In addition, the company has dozens of nodes within their corporate network that need to be locked down since they contain or have access to EPHI.

Situation:
Like all healthcare provider organizations, the company needed to find technologies and methodologies to comply with IT security requirements of HIPAA.

Solution:
The company licensed Policy Commander® to assist with HIPAA compliance through automated security configuration management.

Quote:
"Policy Commander gives us an incredible level of control over the security state of Windows systems used by our remote and internal staff. With Policy Commander, we've been able to establish a self-monitoring and self-correcting security environment that often exceeds the HIPAA requirements."

Solution:
To achieve HIPAA Security Rule compliance, the company first set out to convert the broad HIPAA IT security requirements into specific organizational rules and policies. New Boundary Technologies made this much easier by providing a HIPAA security configuration guide and HIPAA security policy library. The customer's IT department then translated those requirements, leveraging the HIPAA security policy library, into enforceable Windows security policies that create secure Windows configurations.

Result:
The company is currently using Policy Commander to achieve compliance on hundreds of remote systems and 80 internal systems. According to their IT department, Policy Commander gives them the flexibility they need to manage security configurations to their exact specifications.

PolicyCommander®

"One of the more important aspects of Policy Commander is the visibility it gives us into the configuration states of the Windows systems in our environment. That combined with the ability to force compliance with the automated policy enforcement feature gives us an unprecedented level of control that we really need for HIPAA compliance."

According to the customer, becoming HIPAA compliant involved some major changes in their network and desktop administration. "One of the first items on our HIPAA compliance agenda was to get users to their appropriate level of user rights. That meant taking away administrative rights to all users. But with HIPAA as a driving factor, IT needs a high level of control over the computers we support, and that's what Policy Commander gives us."

Another key feature that the customer touts is the Policy Editor. "We really like having the ability to create our own policies and customize the NIST and NSA security policies to fit our environment. If you define and architect your policies well to begin with, you can basically set up your environment and forget it. You don't have to worry about computers drifting out of compliance or users making unauthorized changes that can affect the outcome of an audit."

The company's IT administrators also appreciate the level of integration between Policy Commander and Active Directory. "One of the great things about Policy Commander is that it pulls the Active Directory structure just the way it is. Setting up the Active Directory in Policy Commander is really fast and easy. I don't need to modify it in any way. I just import it and use it."

In addition to using Policy Commander to support compliance efforts, the company also uses Prism Suite™ to distribute software applications to remote users. The company says there are some key advantages to using both Policy Commander and Prism Suite. "We like that Prism Suite and Policy Commander have a common client, and the two products working in tandem give us a really powerful but easy to use configuration management solution."

NOTE: *This case study is based on information provided by a current New Boundary Technologies® customer that licenses Policy Commander® and Prism Suite™. By request of the customer, we have not identified the company.*

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