



CASE STUDY



Western Federal Credit Union Minimizes Risk with Laptop Encryption

The Organization

Based in Manhattan Beach, California, Western Federal Credit Union is one of the nation's leading credit unions, with more than \$2.0 billion in assets and over 176,000 account holders across the country. A regional office in Bentonville, Arkansas supports mid-west and eastern account holders and branches.

The Challenge

During a risk assessment at Western Federal Credit, Nate Howe, who was the company's information security manager, confirmed an action item that was critical to act on: mobile computing devices carried unencrypted data.

"These devices sometimes leave our realm of physical security," Howe noted. "They're laptops that people use in the field, and that corresponded with what we see in the news: many organizations experience lost laptops."

Did the organization really need to store business files on the laptops? The security team conducted a review. "We decided these files had to be on the computer at times, such as for a presentation when network access wasn't available, or to do business development work in the field," Howe said. "So we wanted our employees to continue to use their laptops the way they always have, but we had to gain the assurance that if it was out of their physical possession, it would be a lot harder to compromise data on that laptop."

The Solution

Howe evaluated endpoint encryption solutions from several vendors. "One of the differentiators for us was the concept of central management—we wanted to add this layer of encryption but not put ourselves in a situation where the end user locks himself out of a laptop by forgetting the password, and the hard drive needs to be reformatted and rebuilt," Howe said.

Solution at a Glance

To minimize risk exposure from lost or stolen laptops, Western Federal Credit Union turned to Aurora for centrally managed hard disk encryption that is highly scalable.

"We would rate the overall experience as excellent. We would be glad to work with Aurora again."

**— Nate Howe, former
Information Security Manager,
Western Federal Credit Union**



"We also wanted to guarantee the same service level to end users when they're on our network and when they're off," Howe added. "The encryption layer should not result in a degraded service level. That was an area where Symantec Endpoint Encryption, powered by PGP technology, provided a level of comfort that other solutions did not, especially with its centralized management capabilities."

Howe knew there were Symantec encryption technologies in use at Western in one-off situations to fill partner requirements. Keys and pass phrases were in use without any enforceable policy. "Our decision to purchase the Symantec Encryption Management Server allowed us to gain more control and start integrating all the Symantec encryption products we're currently using," Howe said. "I like the idea of building a model that we can use as our de facto standard of encryption."

For installation and data security expertise, Western turned to Aurora. "There were so many up-front decisions that we had to make correctly, it made sense to bring knowledgeable people in," Howe explained. "A consultant from Aurora did the installation with us, established corporate keys, walked us through the installation, and trained our help desk staff."

Results

Deployment was successful. "We received a high level of support from Aurora," said Howe. "From a client relationship standpoint they did a very good job. We wanted to be able to reach out to the vendor when putting together a budget and get a quote, and we didn't have to wait long to get that data turned around. I never felt like I was dealing with a bureaucracy. Aurora adds value beyond just implementation, in their process of getting to know us and understanding our concerns."

Statistics show that companies lose an average of one percent of their laptops in a year. So far, Western has been fortunate. "The good news is we haven't lost a laptop yet, but we know it's not a question of if, but when," said Howe. "The day will come when a laptop goes missing, whether it's stolen or lost in travel. And that's when the decision to call Aurora will pay for itself. Western serves approximately 176,000 members who consider us their trusted partner," he said. "Securing their data helps protect that trust. Just the cost of notifying our membership of a potential data compromise would likely exceed the cost of this technology solution."

About Aurora®

For over 23 years, Aurora has been architecting, deploying and managing complex enterprise security solutions that solve complex business challenges. Headquartered in Southern California and supporting customers worldwide, Aurora continues to be one of the fastest growing security solution providers in the nation. For more information, visit www.aurorait.com.

* Don McGowan, "Legal Briefs Breach Notification Laws" TechNet Magazine, February 2006, accessed June 15, 2015.

