



VARONIS CASE STUDY

AXA Wealth



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–Serena Lee,
Senior Security Analyst at AXA Wealth

THE CUSTOMER

AXA Wealth

LOCATION

UK

INDUSTRY

Financial Services

AXA Wealth, part of the global AXA Group, provides a range of pension and investment products and services in the UK and Ireland. It employs over 2,300 people across multiple sites in the UK. Its wealth management operations include the AXA Elevate wrap platform, Architas, AXA Wealth International and Sun Life Direct. These core areas are complemented by additional specialist investment and pensions propositions to meet the needs of customers. Its products are primarily delivered through Independent Financial Advisers and its key bancassurance partners. The exception is Sun Life Direct which provides life assurance products directly to consumers.



THE CHALLENGE

With over 2,000 people across multiple sites in the UK, unsurprisingly AXA Wealth's network sharing system was very complex - copious Active Directory security groups, with many people and accounts within these groups, and folders that referred to them for permissions. The service desk would often be asked which groups provided access to which folders, and conversely which folders were accessible by any given group, but it had no way to tell. A further frustration was that the network security team would have to waste time manually digging through logs to determine who was actually accessing the data on its file shares and what they were doing.

EVALUATION PARAMETERS

Having evaluated various alternatives AXA Wealth selected Varonis DatAdvantage to initially identify, and then monitor permissions in its environment. It decided to combine this with DataPrivilege so that data owners can be responsible for managing access to their files, with the simplicity of an automated permissions process.



THE SOLUTION

Right from the start Varonis DatAdvantage started delivering results for AXA Wealth. With a complete, bi-directional view into the permissions structure of its unstructured and semi-structured file systems, AXA Wealth's service desk could immediately answer the previously elusive question of who had access to any given folder. DatAdvantage aggregates Active Directory user and group details, ACL information and all data access events—without requiring native OS auditing. This way AXA Wealth has clear visibility into every file open, create, modify and delete, by every user. Monitoring this intelligence allows AXA Wealth to identify who the correct data owners are, and then get them involved in making sure the right access and usage is assigned.

Serena Lee, senior security analyst, AXA Wealth talks about the projects benefits: “As soon as we installed DatAdvantage we were almost immediately able to answer many of the previously allusive questions – a major breakthrough. We now simply check DatAdvantage to see which groups grant access to any given folder, or which folders a group can access, to make the appropriate permissions allocation.”

AXA Wealth was able to significantly reduce the total number of groups it had by monitoring and removing those that were no longer being used, and also identified individual group members who were no longer using their access so could be removed, which simplified its web of permissions immensely. Lee adds: “By utilising DatAdvantage's automated recommendations we could identify excessive group memberships and remove users from the groups they no longer needed to be in. It didn't take long for us to quickly get all our permissions sorted out.”

When AXA Wealth sold part of its business to Friends Life it had to identify and separate the data owned by Friends Life from data owned by AXA Wealth, and the integrity of both data sets had to be guaranteed. By using DatAdvantage it could immediately see not only what data both teams could have accessed (via permissions), but also what they had actually accessed, to make logical data separation decisions based upon permissions and activity history. This meant it was able to ensure compliance with separation of duties “closed book” requirements during the process, and prove that Friends Life staff had not accessed information which was barred to them. This was particularly useful during the separation period given the sensitivity of the business process.

With DataPrivilege, AXA Wealth has introduced a self-service authorisation process. Like many organisations, the company had a traditional file server where access control lists contain Active Directory security groups. In its case, each security group has an owner, and the owner manages access to that security group to authorise access to the shared directory. Previously, one full-time person spent their day manually collating and circulating lists to the group owners, who then had to review and take people out who did not need access, and add others who did. Today, using DataPrivilege, the process is fully automated and this time can be spent otherwise. Lee concludes: “Today users can request access to a group, and the data owners are automatically involved in the decision to either grant or revoke access without IT intervention. This not only speeds the process up, but also frees up IT to perform other tasks.”



BUSINESS BENEFITS

EASILY TRACK WHO IS ACCESSING DATA AND WHAT THEY ARE DOING

Using the auditing functionality of DatAdvantage, AXA Wealth can see what users are doing with their permissions. The company has clear visibility into every file open, create, modify and delete, by every user accessing the file server.

REDUNDANT GROUPS AND EXCESSIVE PERMISSIONS ELIMINATED

AXA Wealth has significantly reduced the total number of groups it had by monitoring and removing those that were no longer being used, and also identified individual group members who were no longer using their access and could be safely removed, which simplified its web of permissions immensely.

PERMISSIONS PROCESS IS FULLY AUTOMATED

Today users can request access to a group, and the data owners are automatically involved in the decision to either grant or revoke access without IT intervention. This not only speeds the process up, but also frees up IT to perform other tasks.

ABOUT VARONIS

Varonis is the leading provider of software solutions for unstructured, human-generated enterprise data. Varonis provides an innovative software platform that allows enterprises to map, analyze, manage and migrate their unstructured data. Varonis specializes in human-generated data, a type of unstructured data that includes an enterprise's spreadsheets, word processing documents, presentations, audio files, video files, emails, text messages and any other data created by employees. This data often contains an enterprise's financial information, product plans, strategic initiatives, intellectual property and numerous other forms of vital information. IT and business personnel deploy Varonis software for a variety of use cases, including data governance, data security, archiving, file synchronization, enhanced mobile data accessibility and information collaboration.

Free 30-day assessment:

WITHIN HOURS OF INSTALLATION

You can instantly conduct a permissions audit: File and folder access permissions and how those map to specific users and groups. You can even generate reports.

WITHIN A DAY OF INSTALLATION

Varonis DatAdvantage will begin to show you which users are accessing the data, and how.

WITHIN 3 WEEKS OF INSTALLATION

Varonis DatAdvantage will actually make highly reliable recommendations about how to limit access to files and folders to just those users who need it for their jobs.

[START YOUR FREE TRIAL](#)

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