VARONIS CASE STUDY

GDF SUEZ

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—Thibaud Desforges
  GDF SUEZ's Tool and Processing Manager

THE CUSTOMER

GDF SUEZ

LOCATION

Paris, France

INDUSTRY

Utilities

GDF SUEZ's headquarters are in France and the group has a global presence with representation in every continent. Its origins can be traced back to the early 19th Century, and today the Group's businesses are developed around a model based on responsible growth, which champion current major energy and environmental challenges – meeting energy needs, ensuring the security of supply, combating climate change and optimising the use of resources.

With 219,300 people, the Group provides gas and electricity to millions of customers the world over (private individuals, professionals, businesses and local communities). Its strength lies in offering proposals based on a mix of energies and specific services that combine efficiency and safety with supply reliability. It prides itself on utilising high-performance production facilities combined with one of the world's most diversified gas supply portfolios.

It is listed on the Brussels, Paris and Luxembourg stock exchanges and is represented in the main international indices: CAC 40, BEL 20, DJ Euro Stoxx 50, Euronext 100, FTSE Eurotop 100, MSCI Europe, ASPI Eurozone and Vigeo World 120.

THE CHALLENGE

GDF SUEZ had 22,000 users accessing 11 terabytes of data, which was doubling year on year, stored within its French perimeter. At that time file access requests were a complex, two stage process – the request was made through a front end system, then translated and validated by the data owner, and then entered into separate back office system that initiated action by IT. For the IT team, receiving up to 50 to 60 permission requests a day, it was a complex and labour intensive process, and for the end users it was drawn out and frustrating.

In parallel, GDF SUEZ's global internal 'Income' audit identified permissions as an area that would benefit from tighter controls. It highlighted a need for documentation that would verify all file access requests had the correct validation, and were registered within a single database.

EVALUATION PARAMETERS

Thibaud Desforges, GDF SUEZ's Tool and Processing Manager, researched the market to evaluate potential solutions and selected Varonis DatAdvantage and DataPrivilege. Mr. Desforges explains, "There were three key reasons for our selection of Varonis. First is the graphical interface, particularly DataPrivilege's, as it is very easy to manipulate and the interface is intuitive, especially for those users who do not work in the IT field. The second one was how powerful the combined solution is, especially in terms of capacity – we are managing over 350 servers. Lastly was the speed we were able to implement the solution across the GDF SUEZ perimeter. It took roughly between five and seven days which is exceptionally fast for this kind of solution."

Security is another area that GDF SUEZ highlights as a strong point. After implementing DataPrivilege and DatAdvantage, the Group added DatAdvantage for Directory Services, which has allowed it to increase its security level checks in active Directory.

As part of the evaluation process, especially in context of the economic and financial climate, GDF SUEZ has to demonstrate return on investment (ROI) prior to any expenditure commitment. Varonis worked closely with Mr. Desforges to produce demonstrable metrics specific to GDF SUEZ that validated how the solution would yield tangible ROI for the Group.

THE SOLUTION

Prior to this project GDF SUEZ found it difficult to produce reports that identified data owners, nor who was accessing what files.

Since introducing Varonis DatAdvantage, GDF SUEZ is now able to accumulate its Active Directory user and group details, ACL information and all data access events – without requiring native OS auditing. This complete picture has allowed data owners to understand exactly how much information is stored on the servers, who can and who is accessing these files, and identify any user whose permissions need to be revoked. Mr. Desforges adds, "We're always looking for ways to reduce IT expenditure and lowering expensive storage space is one example. The reports DatAdvantage produces allow us to identify files that are no longer accessed and, working with the data owners, these are archived, reducing the need to continuously increase server capacity."

Arguably DataPrivilege is where the greatest benefit has been realised, enabling GDF SUEZ to dramatically improve and accelerate its file access requests. Using the configurable web interface, replacing the previous front and back end systems with a single self-service portal, users can request access for themselves via the DataPrivilege portal. The request is automatically routed to the appropriate data owner who confirms (or declines) the request, and, on approval, correct permissions are automatically provisioned.

Mr. Desforges confirms, "A process that previously took five or six days now takes just a few hours. As all records are documented, we're able to produce reports that weren't possible previously, that addresses the 'Income' audit requirement to document permissions validation. In terms of man-hours, theoretically the time saved from introducing DatAdvantage and DataPrivilege would allow us huge potential savings – freeing up staff for other tasks."

GDF SUEZ has found users who have reacted positively to the introduction of DatAdvantage and DataPrivilege, as verified with a dramatic increase in employee satisfaction – from 70% to 91%, since deploying Varonis. Training has been relatively pain free – taking just a few hours for standard users, due largely to the friendly jargon free interface. Data owners have taken slightly longer to familiarise with the various elements, as is to be expected with a larger range of functionality, but are now able to take control and actively participate in the process.

Moving forward GDF SUEZ is looking to deploy DatAdvantage and DataPrivilege into its other territories, starting with Belgium in the near future.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

**DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE AND ACCELERATE
FILE ACCESS REQUESTS**

The previous complex front and back office systems have been replaced
with a single web interface connecting users and data owners. A process that
previously took five or six days now takes just a few hours.

TIGHTENED PERMISSIONS SECURITY

Able to produce reports, that weren't possible previously, that address the
"income" audit requirement to document permissions validation. Data owners can
understand exactly how much information they have stored on the servers, who
can and who is accessing these files, and identify any user whose permissions
need to be revoked.

IMPROVED EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

All users have reacted positively to the introduction of DatAdvantage and
DataPrivilege, as verified with a significant increase in employee satisfaction –
from 70% to 91%, since deploying Varonis.

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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