



A Top 10 U.S. County Relies on Varonis for Copilot Readiness

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About this case study:

Our customer is a large U.S. county. We have happily accommodated their request to anonymize all names and places.

HIGHLIGHTS

Challenges

- + Protecting PII and CJIS data in M365
- + Time-consuming manual audits
- + Maintaining data retention policies
- + Securing data for AI

Solution

The Varonis Data Security Platform provides:

- + Visibility and control across all enterprise data
- + Real-time alerts on potential threats
- + Proactive threat detection and response

Results

- + Automated outcomes and time savings
- + Significantly reduced blast radius
- + Detected and stopped an insider threat

CHALLENGES

Securing critical data

One of the biggest counties in the U.S. relies on Varonis to secure a wide array of sensitive data in Microsoft 365, comply with privacy regulations, and detect threats.

The security team lead described the critical information they are charged with safeguarding:

“We must protect data that relates to critical infrastructure and information about county operations in general. We must also comply with the Federal Department of Justice CJIS requirements. We look for PII, employee health information, and anything that’s stored where it shouldn’t be or how it shouldn’t be.”

The county’s security team initially selected Varonis to automate their routine audits, ensure they complied with stale data retention policies, and maintain visibility into the organization’s always-growing data. This would be virtually impossible to do manually.

“My team performed manual permissions audits by looking at file shares. It felt as if the moment we found one thing and fixed it, 20 others would emerge. Sometimes we had to go back and fix things we already resolved. It was not sustainable.

The data growth rate was far more than what I could have hired people to do. That’s why we looked at Varonis.”

Varonis identified where the county had sensitive data, who could access it, and what they did with that access. Varonis

also alerted the security team when anything required their attention, so they could contact data owners and right-size permissions as needed.

The security team knew they made the right choice after the Varonis Data Security Platform alerted them to an employee snooping through sensitive files.

“Varonis alerted us to a curious employee opening their manager’s files. At that point, we knew Varonis was a sound investment.”

SOLUTION

Switching to Varonis’ cloud-native Data Security Platform with confidence

When it came time to renew their subscription, the security team considered Varonis’ self-hosted version. But when they saw what Varonis’ cloud-native Data Security Platform could do, they decided to make the switch.

“Varonis would be evolving faster on the SaaS front and would take care of updates and maintenance for us. We were looking for less work on my team and sooner access to newer, better features. That’s what led us to look at the SaaS model.”

The county’s transition to Varonis’ cloud-native platform exceeded the security team’s expectations, and the Varonis team did all the heavy lifting for them.

“I was very pleased with the Varonis onboarding team. We had great sales and executive support, and Varonis brought wonderful resources to help us kickstart the process.”

“We’re also very pleased with our decision to switch to Varonis’ SaaS offering. We did a pilot, purchased it, and deployed it. We had everything stood up and running in less than a month.”

Microsoft 365 Copilot readiness

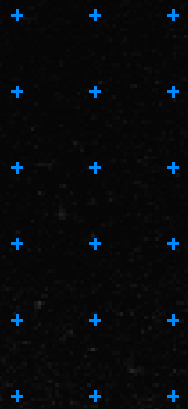
The county has been looking to introduce Microsoft 365 Copilot and is taking the necessary steps ahead of time to mitigate risks that gen AI could amplify. Namely, an insider — or a threat actor with access — could use plain-language prompts to query Copilot to surface sensitive data throughout the organization.

AI tools can easily expose even the most sensitive information without the proper controls. For most organizations, that means knowing where sensitive data exists, controlling access to that data continually and at scale, and being able to monitor data activity — including Copilot data activity — to proactively detect and stop threats. The security team lead put it this way:

“I want to ensure that as we roll out Copilot and other versions of AI, we know where our sensitive data is and can protect it from being ingested by those AI platforms. We don’t want someone to figure out how to ask, ‘What are all the passwords in the organization?’ and have AI diligently give back a response of all the usernames and passwords it found.”

Together, Varonis and Microsoft help organizations confidently harness the power of Copilot by continually assessing and improving their Microsoft 365 data security posture before, during, and after deployment.

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RESULTS

Automated data security outcomes

According to the security team lead, Varonis' automation saves them the equivalent of a part-time employee. It also frees the team up to focus on more impactful work because Varonis' Data Security Platform automates manual processes that used to take hours and hours every month.

"Varonis saves my team time. They don't have to do the manual file share exploration. They can pull the reports and get action from those other teams that control the file shares and manage those rights."

"I've gained the equivalent of a part-time employee by freeing up my team's valuable time. In terms of saving my time, I don't have to meet with as many managers on the data owner side to explain what we found from screenshots and documentation. Varonis reports give us what we need to get the point across."

On top of the hours gained back, the county achieved massive risk reduction by eliminating attack vectors like unused or excessive permissions with minimal effort.

Reducing the county's blast radius

Overall, Varonis significantly reduced the county's blast radius — the potential damage an attacker could do if they successfully landed in the county's environment.

"Varonis has helped mostly on the permission side, where you might have an employee from one department access sensitive data from another department. We've been able to containerize that significantly."

By eliminating access that's not needed or used and implementing monitoring to proactively detect suspicious behavior, the county tightened its grip on sensitive data, keeping it out of attackers' hands.

Proactive Incident Response

In addition to having the leading Data Security Platform at their fingertips, the security team knows they have support if they receive an alert requiring expert attention. With Proactive Incident Response included



with their SaaS subscription, the Varonis team stands ready to help the county's security team investigate anything out of the ordinary.

"If we see an alert from Varonis of suspicious activity, I know that Varonis has the incident response resources to help us if something comes up."

Unprecedented visibility to support an evolving security strategy

According to the security team lead, Varonis has been an eye-opening experience for the security team, IT team, and beyond.

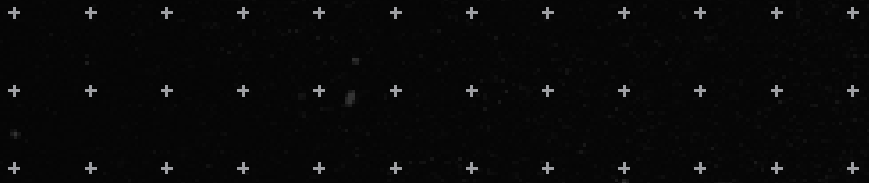
"We could show our file system and server teams that they had a lot of unused data — terabytes worth. I was happy to give them access to Varonis so they could find this on their own. Varonis has helped us with cross-team collaboration."

Varonis helped the county improve its overall data security posture and cybersecurity strategy.

"In terms of evolving our strategy, having Varonis has led me to reevaluate all of our playbooks so that virtually any alerts or notifications or reports that come out from Varonis are integrated into the day-to-day operations of my incident response team."

What's more, Varonis provides the county's security team with expert support along the way.

"Everyone at Varonis is a stellar professional, from the sales team to the onboarding team and the executives at Varonis. Everyone knows what they're talking about."



Your Data. Our Mission.

Varonis can get you ready for Gen AI.

[Request a demo](#)