



How Communitis Protects Global Customer Data With Varonis



I think cybersecurity should keep everyone up at night. You have so much data and you would not want to lose it. That's why I recommend Varonis.



Highlights

Challenges

- Protecting over 1 billion documents a year
- Complying with global regulations
- Extending data protection to on-premises and cloud files

Solution

Varonis Data Security Platform:

- **DatAdvantage** gives complete visibility and control over critical data and IT infrastructure
- **Data Classification Engine** finds and classifies sensitive data automatically
- **Policy Pack** enhances Data Classification Engine with GDPR patterns
- **DataPrivilege** streamlines data access governance
- **Automation Engine** automatically repairs and maintains file system permissions
- **Data Transport Engine** enforces rules for data movement and migration
- **DatAlert** monitors and alerts on abnormal behavior in critical systems
- **Edge** detects and helps prevent DNS exfiltration attempts

Results

- Windows and Microsoft 365 data protection
- Proactive threat detection and response

Challenges

Protecting global customer data

Communis is a leading integrated marketing services agency that supports top brands with a wide range of services. Every year, they process over **one billion documents** for prominent brands across a wide variety of industries.

As a proactive organization, having proper safeguards in place to identify and protect all of the sensitive data that they use, share, and store daily is non-negotiable, says Michelle Griffey, Chief Risk Officer.




“We’ve got a lot of extremely sensitive customer data and a lot of processes that need to be followed. We handle over a billion documents annually. All of it needs to be protected,” she says.

Global companies like Communis need to be able to prove compliance under the GDPR and the UK’s Data Protection Act. Fortunately, Communis has a proactive stance on data security.

Varonis helps Communis comply with PCI DSS, ISO 27001, and ISO 22301. But in addition to compliance, Michelle and her team care about protecting sensitive data and detecting and responding to threats.



“We want to make sure we’re not responsible for a data leak,” she says.



“We handle a lot of data across a wide gamut of security needs. And every single way you look at it, cybersecurity becomes more important and attacks become more prevalent each year.”

Solution

Phase 1: Getting GDPR ready

The Communisis and Varonis partnership began with:

- DatAdvantage
- Data Classification Engine
- DataPrivilege
- DatAlert

Michelle's priority at the time was hardening Windows security and achieving compliance in anticipation of GDPR.

She needed visibility into where sensitive data was stored and who had access to it. This included company data, such as payroll and PII, and client information, including unreleased marketing material for upcoming campaigns.

Varonis showed her where sensitive data lived across the environment and who had access to that data. Varonis also helped eliminate areas of overexposure and automate the entitlement review process.



“Varonis helps us make sure the right people have access to files, understand our environment more clearly, and know when we have sensitive data we didn’t know about,” she says.

Michelle was also thinking about how to proactively handle threats like ransomware. That's why Communisis purchased **DatAlert**, which automatically detects anomalous behavior and enables her to drill into each alert for more context.

Phase 2: Time and cost-saving automation

In 2019, the time was right to extend on-premises data security capabilities and introduce time-saving automation. To achieve those goals, they purchased:

- DatAdvantage for Directory Services
- Policy Pack
- Automation Engine
- Data Transport Engine
- Edge

DatAdvantage for Directory Services gives Michelle 360-degree visibility into Active Directory domains. Meanwhile, **Policy Pack**'s auto-updating policies make it even easier to discover GDPR data.

The biggest cost and time savings come from Varonis automation. **Data Transport Engine** helps them save on storage costs automatically move, quarantine, or delete stale data. Whereas **Automation Engine** quickly and safely removes global "everyone" access to data.

But the product that Michelle likes most is **Edge**. Edge guards the network perimeter and leverages advanced threat models to help fight APTs and insider threats.



"Edge really excites me," Michelle says. "It ticks security boxes that other systems lack and helps us understand if anything unusual is happening."

Phase 3: Extending data protection to the cloud

In 2022, Michelle had eyes on gaining the same visibility in Microsoft 365 as they had on-prem. To extend Varonis' capabilities, Communisis purchased **DatAdvantage** and **Data Classification** modules for:

- Azure Active Directory
- OneDrive
- SharePoint Online

The new modules give Michelle the same hierarchical view of sites, folders, and Teams in Microsoft 365 as they have in the on-premises environment.

The team also added, **DatAnswers**, which is basically Google for sensitive data. Now, Michelle and her team can find PII that lives in their hybrid environment to fulfill Subject Access Requests in seconds.

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“DatAnswers makes life so much easier because goodness only knows how you’d find anything in the labyrinth of unstructured files, particularly in the timeframe you need to it. It would be almost impossible,” Michelle says.

**“One of the things I love about Varonis:
it does a lot of analysis before it tells
you what’s happening in your system,
versus other tools that spew out
hundreds of answers and then ask you
to dig through them.”**

Results

Holistic on-prem and cloud data security

Communis now has a robust suite of security solutions, which add up to results far greater than the sum of their parts:

- Windows and Microsoft 365 data protection
- Compliance with GDPR and other regulations
- Proactive threat detection and response

The benefits are numerous: cost savings on data storage, confidence to deal with cyber threats and other threats, and — most importantly — increased client trust.




“Varonis helps us prove that we’re doing the right thing in client audits. It also helps me communicate the importance of data governance, data security, and an improved security posture to the board,” Michelle says.

But it’s not just the software that Michelle values. It’s also the team behind the products, who works to ensure that Communis sees value from every purchase and helps them lock down their data and handle potential threats with confidence.



“The team gives me a huge amount of confidence. Honestly, when Varonis told me that we have access to free incident response, my first reaction was, ‘That can’t be true.’” Michelle laughs. “But the first time we used it... it was incredible. You can feel how much their team cares about your security.”



“Varonis helped us get rid of our stale data — and that was one of the benefits that almost eclipsed our initial need. Our data storage numbers dropped off a cliff after we started using Data Transport Engine.”



Protect your data from the heart to the edge.

Discover where you're at risk. Reduce risk in no time.

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