



How Varonis Helped Sheridans Move to Microsoft 365 With Confidence



Varonis gives us security from three sides: We have an audit trail of who is accessing our data. We're able to proactively meet compliance regulations. We can quickly detect and stop breaches.



Highlights

Challenges

- Ensuring privacy for high-profile clients
- Extending data security to Microsoft 365
- Proactively protecting data against ransomware and other threats

Solution

Varonis Data Security Platform:

- **DatAdvantage** gives complete visibility and control over critical data, on-premises and in Microsoft 365
- **Data Classification Engine** finds and classifies sensitive data automatically
- **Policy Pack** enhances Data Classification Engine with GDPR patterns
- **DatAlert** monitors and alerts on abnormal behavior in critical systems

Results

- Data protection on-premises and in the cloud
- Threat detection and alerting
- Comprehensive solution to meet cyber insurance criteria

Challenges

Embracing digital change to support rapid growth

Sheridans is a leading media and technology law firm that prioritizes client confidentiality. But recently, a period of rapid growth put Sheridans' high standards to the test.

In two years, the company grew nearly 40%. In the middle of that, they also had to cope with the realities of COVID-19.

Unlike many law firms, which are typically slower to adapt to digital change, Sheridans embraced new technology and the cloud. They transitioned from a fully in-office environment to a 100% remote workforce in three days.

Sheridans was already working with Varonis to ensure its on-prem data was secure, but the firm's rapid transition to remote work kicked off a new conversation with Varonis. The firm had to ensure it was doing everything it could to protect information about its clients in the cloud.

Extending data protection to the cloud

Rapid growth and fast digital transformation created new challenges for the IT team. They had to monitor the data activity of significantly more users and make sure that their on-prem data security extended to Microsoft 365 as well.



James Barraclough, IT Analyst at Sheridans, explains, "It was a period of organic — but rapid — infrastructure growth. There was a huge amount of data we needed to manage, and we needed to make sure it was all GDPR compliant."

By using Microsoft 365 tools, such as Teams, OneDrive, SharePoint Online, and others, Sheridans centralized communication and streamlined remote work to ensure that business could carry on as usual. But with that increased productivity and collaboration came new and more complex cyber risks.

Protecting sensitive data from cyberattacks

While the IT team was thinking about cloud data governance and compliance, Sheridans' Partnerships Secretary, Nilesh Mehta, looked to answer the question of how to secure cloud data against potential cyberattacks.



Nilesh says, “We needed to build up our walls against growing phishing and cyberattacks — especially because of the sector we’re involved in. When you’re acting on behalf of well-known individuals and companies in the media industry, cybersecurity is very important.”

Sheridans has always been ahead of the curve in terms of security and privacy. Nilesh intended to stay proactive, even as his firm embraced digital transformation.

Nilesh reached out to James for recommendations, and James recommended Varonis. The platform had everything Sheridans needed to proactively get ahead of ever-changing cybersecurity and compliance needs.

“As companies grow, they become bigger targets for cybercriminals. You need to have as many defenses as you can to build up your walls... and that’s where we saw the benefit of Varonis.”

Solution

Varonis on-prem data security

Varonis Data Security Platform gives Sheridans visibility and control of their data on-premises and in the cloud.

Sheridans initially chose Varonis to protect their on-prem data. **DatAdvantage** for Windows and Directory Services provided the on-prem access intelligence and activity auditing they needed.

Sheridans also uses **Data Classification Engine** to discover and assess the risk to sensitive data, such as personally identifiable information (PII) and financial records. **Policy Pack** lets Sheridans seek out sensitive data specifically covered by GDPR and other regulations.



“With Varonis, I can prove that all PII and GDPR information is classified and fully audited. You have to be able to show regulatory bodies that you can do that,” James says.

Expanding to Microsoft 365 with confidence

With the move to Microsoft 365, Sheridans decided to expand Varonis’ capabilities by adding modules to support Azure Active Directory, OneDrive, and SharePoint Online.

The modules give James and his team the same visibility and control in the cloud that they enjoy on-prem.



“It’s been a busy couple of years and Varonis evolved along with our needs,” James explains. “At first, we found it appealing that DatAdvantage could support us 100% on-prem. But then when we started using the full Microsoft 365 environment, having protection for OneDrive and SharePoint Online became critical.”

Having this protection in the cloud is pivotal for mitigating risk and meeting cyber insurance criteria. To maintain coverage and help ensure claims are not denied, policyholders must comply with insurance policy data protection and retention policies. With Varonis' auditing and reporting, that's not something Sheridans has to worry about.



“Having Varonis passively checking compliance is hugely useful from a cyber insurance perspective,” James says.

Alerting to protect data from ransomware

The complete Varonis solution enables Sheridans to proactively defend data against ransomware, detect potential breaches, and quickly defeat bad actors in their hybrid environment.

DatAlert monitors critical assets for suspicious activity. When the solution detects unusual behavior, it executes automated scripts to remove compromised devices from the network and lock out the affected users while the IT team investigates.




“DatAlert allows us to set up automated responses to certain behaviors. Specifically, if someone starts acting weird, Varonis will kick them out as quickly as possible,” James says.

In the event of a breach, the Varonis Incident Response team will help Sheridans investigate and eradicate the threat.



“Having a second opinion from a team with so much technical expertise is immensely reassuring,” James says.



“One of the worrying things about Microsoft 365 is that anyone can access your data from anywhere, in principle. One of the nice things about Varonis is we have a full record of every attempted login from anywhere. Varonis’ cloud monitoring gives us a greater sense of security and helps us minimize exposure in the cloud.”

Results

Embracing digital transformation with confidence

Sheridans' story is one of resilience and adaptation in the middle of turbulence. While other law firms struggled to deliver "business as usual," Sheridans moved to the cloud in record time and continues to put client data and privacy first.

Varonis covers all of Sheridans' present needs — a perfect trifecta of data security, threat detection and response, and compliance support. And, as the company's use of SaaS grows, Varonis can support those evolving needs, too.

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“Varonis gives us security from three sides: We have an audit trail of who is accessing our data. We're able to proactively meet compliance regulations. We can quickly detect and stop breaches,” James says.

For James, Nilesh, and the entire team at Sheridans, having that data protection in place is a source of comfort.

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“It helps me sleep at night to know that our IT team can monitor our data effectively, the product will capture incidents as intended, and we have a team of people to help if anything goes wrong,” Nilesh agrees.

James now recommends Varonis to other organizations that are on the cusp of digital transformation and any company that needs to automate compliance controls quickly for cyber insurance purposes.

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“If you need to move to Microsoft 365 quickly like Sheridans, you should 100% get Varonis. If you need automation modules, you should 100% get Varonis. The ACL automation alone will save you potentially hundreds of hours,” he says.



“Varonis does exactly what I wanted — it enables us to proactively lock down our data, prevents people from accessing data they shouldn’t, and notifies us when something is wrong.”



**Scale your data
security alongside your
growing business.**

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