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How AppsFlyer Secures Identities in a 100% Cloud Environment

CASE STUDY

"Polyrize (now DatAdvantage Cloud) provides the single pane of glass for the different cloud apps that I was missing."

Guy Flechter, CISO & DPO

This case study was originally published by Polyrize, which Varonis acquired in 2020.

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AppsFlyer, headquartered in San Francisco with 18 global offices and over 1,000 employees, is the global leader in attribution. The company's mission is to enable its customers — app marketers and developers — to measure their marketing campaigns.

CHALLENGES

- Securing identities and permissions across thousands of identities and multiple locations

- Visibility and control in a complex cloud environment

- Enforcing least privilege access

SOLUTION

- **DatAdvantage Cloud** (formerly Polyrize) maps and analyzes relationships between users and data across siloed cloud applications and services

RESULTS

- Enhanced cloud security posture while decreasing costs

- The ability to identify users at the center of high-risk events

- Detect and respond to high-risk events

Challenges

AppsFlyer is committed to its vision as a cloud-first, cloud-native company and has built a corporate network born in the cloud — its product infrastructure is based on AWS, and all business apps used by employees and contractors are SaaS-based.

The primary security challenge for the organization, then, was securing the profusion of identities and permissions in their complex cloud environment and across thousands of identities and multiple locations, which the security team didn't have the level of visibility and control over the way they would have with an on-prem network.

Guy Flechter, CISO and DPO at AppsFlyer observed, "The greatest security risk to our cloud environment was the proliferation of human and non-human identities and their complex permissions across many dissimilar cloud services, which significantly increased our attack surface. So enforcing least privilege access, pruning unused and misconfigured permissions, and eliminating unused identities in real-time was a key goal for us."

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Solution

AppsFlyer already had experience with a number of cloud security solutions, such as a software-defined perimeter technology to provide Zero Trust Access to services inside of production and a Cloud Access Security Broker (CASB) solution. The latter had been jettisoned prior to engagement because, while their CASB was able to detect data leakage and other incidents, it had limited security value due to a lack of insight into identities and privileges.

"Although our CASB allowed us to see some risky user activities, it provided no visibility into what assets users had access to," said Flechter. "A lot of context was missing and identifying risky identities and privileges was a mess. Take as an example, Salesforce or AWS, it didn't come close to solving the visibility issue. By correlating identities, permissions and activities, Polyrize (now DatAdvantage Cloud) enabled us to understand which employees and contractors would have the highest impact on our organization in the event of a data leak or account compromise due to, say, overly broad permissions or access to large amounts of business-critical data."

AppsFlyer engaged with Polyrize (aquired by Varonis in 2020), whose mission is to provide visibility and control over identities and access. They initially posed a tough challenge to the Polyrize team — to automate the process of tracking and monitoring all of their identities and privileges in real time, ultimately across multiple SaaS and IaaS services — a process they had been trying to manage to date through cumbersome, static spreadsheets.

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> "I asked the Polyrize team to first and foremost connect into Okta and tell me in a proactive way, what groups have access to which apps so I can determine if their access is appropriate," said Flechter. "Second, I wanted to be able to find excessive or misconfigured assignments, so my team could quickly isolate problems and revoke access if necessary."

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Detecting and Responding to Security Events

In addition to addressing AppsFlyer's original use case, Polyrize (now DatAdvantage Cloud) added a critical layer of reactive security, enabling AppsFlyer to detect and respond to security events as they occurred. "Polyrize provides the single pane of glass for the different cloud apps that I was missing," said Flechter. "Being able to discover risky identities, right size access and detect their misuse on the same platform not only makes the security process easy to manage but also provides additional protection when incidents occur."

The Polyrize support and customer success teams worked closely with the AppsFlyer security team to deploy the Polyrize platform and integrate it into their overall cloud security infrastructure and processes.

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"The Polyrize team worked closely with us throughout initial deployment and continues to regularly synchronize with us to address any issues during periodic health checks, providing security controls and compliance visibility," said Flechter, "We now consider them a trusted partner and an integral part of our cloud security strategy."

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Results

"The results have been dramatic," remarked Flechter, "Today, Polyrize (now DatAdvantage Cloud) helps me minimize our potential blast radius through uncovering unused identities and misconfigured permissions, identify the users at the center of high-risk events, and detect, respond to, and investigate high-risk events after they occur. In addition, Polyrize (now Varonis) has enhanced my cloud security posture while decreasing my security team costs and security management overhead."

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