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How Penguin Random House Partnered with Varonis and Orange Cyberdefense for Data-Centric Compliance

CASE STUDY



“What I like about Varonis is that they come from a data-centric place. That’s key. Other products protect the infrastructure, but they do nothing to protect your most precious commodity—your data.”



Deborah Haworth,

CISO, Penguin Random House

HIGHLIGHTS

CHALLENGES

- Mounting on-premises data storage costs
- Requiring visibility into enterprise data in the cloud
- Satisfying strict compliance regulations like the GDPR

SOLUTION

Orange Cyberdefense:

- Serves as a key partner, providing the first line of defense and support

Varonis Data Security Platform:

- **DatAdvantage** maps data access activity across file and email systems
- **Data Classification Engine** finds and classifies sensitive data
- **Policy Pack** enhances Data Classification Engine with GDPR patterns
- **DatAlert** monitors and alerts to abnormal behavior on critical systems
- **Automation Engine** automatically repairs and maintains file system permissions
- **DatAnswers** helps fulfill DSARs quickly and easily

RESULTS

- Able to move to Microsoft 365 with confidence
- Data visibility helps proactively mitigate risk
- GDPR rules automatically enforced

Challenges

Proactively protecting enterprise data

As companies grow, the cost of storing data on-premises becomes increasingly untenable. That's why Penguin Random House decided to move their on-premises environment and email to the cloud.

But as the largest global trade publisher in the world, Penguin Random House also had to protect the sensitive data of customers and best-selling authors.

As CISO Deborah Haworth explains:



“We were finding storage costs on-premises to be very expensive and not particularly collaborative. So we moved to the cloud and, as part of our journey, we were looking for a solution that would enable us to adequately secure our intellectual property.”

To facilitate the move, Deborah and her team began proactively evolving Penguin Random House's cybersecurity stance. They reassessed their previous system and realized that it lacked the capabilities and visibility they needed.

So they began seeking out a new solution that would...

1. **Secure sensitive data.** Gaining visibility into where data lives and who has access enables the security team to proactively take mitigative action.
2. **Enforce regulatory compliance.** Because it operates in the UK, Penguin Random House needs to follow strict data privacy regulations, including GDPR.
3. **Decrease manual labor.** With over 300 TB of data across 9 million folders, they needed a way to locate specific data quickly and accurately to fulfill Data Subject Access Requests.
4. **Scale with intent.** They needed to protect enterprise data on-premises and in the cloud throughout the work-in-progress lifecycle.

After testing numerous potential solutions in their environment, **Varonis Data Security Platform** proved to be the best fit.



“Varonis is very scalable in intent. Where other products were difficult to come to terms with during implementation, we performed a Proof of Concept of Varonis and found it very intuitive to use.”



“We moved to the cloud and, as part of our journey, we were looking for a solution that would enable us to adequately secure our intellectual property.”

Solution

Intuitive systems backed by knowledgeable support

Deborah understands that the best way to mitigate risk is to take proactive action. Varonis provides visibility into data and user access activity on-premises and in the cloud.



“Our investment in Varonis was a strategic decision. We needed a platform that would secure our unstructured data in whatever form, in whichever location we decided to apply it.”

One of Varonis’ key partners, **Orange Cyberdefense**, helped Deborah configure and implement the Varonis Data Security Platform in Penguin Random House’s environment.



“It’s been a three-way partnership. Orange Cyberdefense adds a lot of value to the process by being able to directly answer questions and providing the first line of support and advice for us. They take the ‘heavy lifting’ out of the equation, which enables our technical team to focus on addressing the underlying issues.”

Deborah highly values this collaborative partnership. She explains the unexpected benefits of having two highly responsive, knowledgeable partners who are happy to help.



“Working with Orange Cyberdefense as a partner helps to bring extra value to our engagements with security product vendors.

A good example of this is how they worked alongside ourselves and Varonis to resolve an issue with false-positive alerting on a cloud storage platform.

Orange Cyberdefense stepped in and facilitated a meeting between all parties which led to increased understanding on all sides and, most importantly, rapid resolution of the issue.”

The most robust data security solution

Varonis emphasizes proactive risk mitigation. By enabling security teams to lock down sensitive data and implement and enforce least privilege, companies like Penguin Random House can move to the cloud with confidence.



“What I like about Varonis is that they come from a data-centric place. That’s key. When we talk about information security, it’s really putting the information and the data front-and-center of our attention. Other products protect the infrastructure, but they do nothing to protect your most precious commodity—your data.”

Varonis gives Deborah enhanced visibility. The solutions she relies on include:

- **DatAdvantage** for Windows, Directory Services, SharePoint Online, and OneDrive to map data access activity across file and email systems.
- **Data Classification Engine** for Windows, SharePoint, SharePoint Online, and OneDrive to find sensitive data stored on-premises and in the cloud.

- **Policy Pack** to enhance Data Classification Engine with GDPR patterns.
- **DatAlert** to monitor and alert on file and email systems for abnormal user behavior indicative of a potential threat.
- **Automation Engine** to automate large remediation projects by locking down files with global (everyone) access.
- **DatAnswers** to quickly fulfill Data Subject Access Requests (DSARs) required under GDPR.



“Data Protection professionals will be familiar with the challenge of providing a response to DSARs within the one-month statutory period.

Varonis DatAnswers allows us to cover multiple locations in a single search and increase the speed of results via search parameters. This is all a world away from any manual efforts we could previously make.”

The Varonis platform also includes a management reporting dashboard that Deborah uses to measure KPIs on the health and security of Penguin Random House’s infrastructure.



“Varonis DatAnswers removes the manual effort by automating the search and classification function.”

Results

Moving from reactive to proactive risk mitigation

With Varonis, Deborah has the evidence she needs to assure leadership teams that unstructured data in the cloud is just as secure as their on-premises environments. This enabled them to make the move to Microsoft 365 with confidence.



“We measure Varonis’ value and benefit in risk reduction over time. The more you reduce risk, the more time you get to spend on proactive activity rather than reacting to new emergencies.”

Solutions like DatAdvantage and Automation Engine have helped put risk remediation on autopilot, fixing issues like broken permissions in the background in a fraction of the time. The end result is less stress for everyone involved.



“We’ve been able to put a standardized process and approach into place, which ultimately takes a lot of pressure off individuals who used to have to come up with solutions under time pressure.

It’s also significantly less stressful for our publishing departments because now they have a clear set of guidelines of what to do with sensitive information, how to store it, how to handle it, and where to get help. It’s repeatable and allows them to act with confidence.”

When it comes to complying with strict data privacy regulations like the GDPR, Varonis helps lock down sensitive data and automatically enforce the rules. Crucial tasks like DSAR fulfilment are now accomplishable within minutes.



“The whole process is auditable and secure, it ensures that we find all of the data without leaving gaps, and it minimizes the number of people who are reviewing the personal data.”



“The more you reduce risk, the more time you get to spend on proactive activity rather than reacting to new emergencies.”



Strengthen your defenses with data-centric compliance.

Confidently meet GDPR requirements on-premises and in the cloud.

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