



# How a West Coast Utility Generates SOX Compliance Reports in Mere Minutes

## CASE STUDY



“Without Varonis, it would take me hours to dig up the data—hours longer to aggregate it into some kind of readable report—and it would be full of the potential for human error. **Varonis doesn’t make mistakes, it doesn’t lie, and it generates the reports we need very quickly.**”



### ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY:

Our client is a publicly traded utility. We have happily accommodated their request to anonymize all names & places.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### CHALLENGES

- Creating SOX compliance reports took days
- “Hunting and pecking” through data manually increases risk of human error
- Even accidental non-compliance could result in up to \$1 million in fines and 10 years of jail time

### SOLUTION

The most robust data security platform:

- **DatAdvantage for Windows** simplifies SOX compliance
- **DatAdvantage for SharePoint** gives visibility into SharePoint data stores
- **Data Classification Engine** scans data stores and locates sensitive data

### RESULTS

- SOX compliance status reports in minutes, not days
- Increased stakeholder confidence thanks to improved financial reporting
- Decreased risk of cyberattacks and data breaches thanks to least-privilege model enforcement

## Challenges

### MAKING SOX COMPLIANCE HASSLE-FREE

Before Varonis, a West Coast utility (anonymous by request) used to spend days compiling Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) compliance reports. The process was time-consuming and tedious for the IT team, as one server admin explains:



“We’d manually hunt and peck through folders to cobble together the SOX regulatory data we needed: Where is the data located? Who owns it? Who can access it? Before Varonis, it used to take us days.”

The primary purpose of a [SOX compliance audit](#) is to verify the security of a company’s financial statements.

Non-compliance isn’t an option. Even accidental non-compliance may result in up to \$1 million in fines and 10 years of jail time. Not to mention the damage it would do to the company’s reputation and its customers if sensitive financial information were ever stolen.

The utility company needed to update and maintain accurate documentation proving SOX compliance—but their manual process exponentially increased the risk of human error.

If the server admin happened to overlook a sensitive folder or accidentally gave a user too much permission, they'd put the entire company at risk. If an audit uncovered holes in their financial data security, the CEO and CFO would be the ones taking the fall.

Even when audits went smoothly, the process was nerve-wracking. They consumed the IT team's time for days on end and everything needed to be manually double- and triple-checked for accuracy. It was horribly inefficient.

All of that changed with Varonis.

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# Solution

## SOX INTERNAL CONTROL AUDITS MADE EASY

With Varonis, the West Coast utility can easily and instantly comply with auditor requests for SOX compliance status reports—even during the busiest times of the year.

**DatAdvantage for Windows and SharePoint** gives the server admin a bi-directional view into the permission structure of their servers. Data accessibility and ownership is clearly laid out, and remedying over-permissiveness takes seconds.

This takes one of the biggest risks out of SharePoint sites, which are vulnerable to overexposure through global access groups (e.g., when an authenticated user clicks the dreaded “add all authenticated users” button). If that happens, DatAdvantage instantly flags the issue and provides actionable intelligence on how to make permissions changes without affecting business workflows.

If the server admin ever runs into an issue, knowing that Varonis’ support team is always on hand to help gives them tremendous peace of mind.



“The best thing about Varonis is, first and foremost: the power of the product. Second: the human touch behind the company. Everyone I’ve worked with has been fantastic, friendly, and knowledgeable.”

**Data Classification Engine** complements DatAdvantage by classifying financial data, wherever it may live. When users accidentally store sensitive data (e.g., financial records, credit card numbers, social security numbers, PII, etc.) somewhere they shouldn’t, Varonis flags these “hits” of sensitive data and runs them up the flagpole for correction.

Data Classification Engine also detects and alerts the server admin to the existence of regulated data automatically, including SOX, GDPR, HIPAA, PHI, PCI, GLBA, and more.

Varonis provides critical context to the security of financial data. It gives the server admin full visibility into the company's servers, and enables them to prove that they have **access and change management controls** in place.

With a few simple clicks, the server admin can effortlessly create reports in whatever format they want—and prove regulatory compliance without any fuss or inaccuracy.

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“We enter the data we want, perform a couple of mouse clicks, choose the output format—and Varonis gives us the reports we need. It's clearly delineated and it's impossible to argue with.”

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# Results

## SOX COMPLIANCE AUDITS IN MINUTES, NOT DAYS

Varonis eliminates the time and risk that comes with proving SOX compliance manually. For the West Coast utility, this translates to innumerable hours saved every month.



“It used to take us days. Now, it never takes more than 30 minutes to create a report with all of the details auditors want.”

More importantly, audits are now almost effortless. With a few clicks, the server admin can generate a comprehensive report with all of the info they need to prove compliance and demonstrate that they have the proper controls in place.



“During SOX crunch time, I can’t imagine not having Varonis to help. It would be horrible, unfathomable. If you want to keep the internal auditors off your back, use Varonis.”

But the practical benefits extend beyond saved time and increased operational efficiency. With Varonis, and the increased visibility and control it provides, this utility company is also able to...

**Safeguard servers against  
costly data breaches.**

Locking down financial data mitigates the risk posed by insider and outsider threats, including cyberattacks.

**Resolve risks before they  
escalate.**

Resolving permissions issues, finding hidden SOX data, and detecting abnormal access to financial files is all on autopilot with Varonis.

**Increase stakeholder  
confidence.**

User-friendly and predictable reports make stakeholders happy.

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“My boss and the people he shares the reports with always come back happy. The internal feedback is unanimous: it’s all the data they need, presented cleanly and intuitively.”

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# SOX compliance doesn't have to be difficult

Automate SOX data security controls and remove  
uncertainty from audits with Varonis.

[REQUEST A DEMO](#)