



Being Proactive to Stay Ahead of Data Threats

Industry

Education

Customer Profile

In late 2005, the University of San Francisco celebrated its sesquicentennial (150th anniversary), marking the occasion with a variety of educational and cultural events. Since its modest origins as a one-room schoolhouse situated south of Market Street on a cluster of sand dunes, the university has achieved international recognition as a leading Jesuit, Catholic university. During a typical year, over 1,000 USF undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees are granted and over half of the undergraduates traditionally continue on to graduate-level study. Educating minds and hearts to change the world.

Challenges

- Proactively address the security issues associated with faculty use of mobile computers, workstations, and network resources.
- Phase in a consistent security strategy over a three-year cycle as computers and workstations are upgraded.
- Evaluate options for protecting a wider range of computing devices, such as PDAs and smartphones.

Utimaco Solution

- SafeGuard Easy

Securing Data Before Problems Arise

In coordination with the Information Technology Services (ITS) group at University of San Francisco, Desktop Engineering Manager Dale Pablo has embarked on an initiative to enhance the security of computing devices assigned to staff and faculty members and better protect sensitive information on university servers. With a staff of 65 professionals, the ITS group oversees a wide range of communication and computing devices, including phones, personal computers, network hardware, servers, and training. The group sought a full-disk encryption solution to ensure that confidential data transported on mobile computers would not be compromised if equipment was lost or stolen. In the process of evaluating and testing solutions, ITS recognized the value of extending encryption protection to network resources as well, and this became a key element of the initiative.

“Our goal was to prevent a situation where a certain machine might be stolen and data compromised,” Pablo explained. “For a number of weeks, we evaluated solutions to prevent that kind of data loss from happening.”

USF also had a strong incentive from a regulatory compliance standpoint. Walter Petruska, Information Security Officer at USF, commented, “The University is very aware of regulations that currently apply to our environment or that may apply in some way in the future, such as S.B. 1384, HIPAA, and FERPA, that impact many different areas of privacy. To comply with the letter and spirit of these regulations, we needed to incorporate a security solution that delivers protection at the desktop level. The compliance mandates weigh equally with the need to provide a preventive security solution as part of the overall university practices.”

Why Utimaco? The Value of Hands-On Demos

Given the difficulty of evaluating security solutions without some form of hands-on testing, demo versions of software provide an important opportunity for organizations to see how well a particular product suits their environment. ITS took advantage of a number of demos to get a feel for the security feature sets and real-world behavior of leading encryption products on the market.

“Within the ITS group, we looked into many of the leading solutions in the data encryption market. Ultimately, we contacted Utimaco. We were pleased with the demo they provided us. We also ran demos from the other vendors and we performed a few evaluations—four different products in all. Utimaco came up on top, based on the flexibility within the pricing requirements we had, as well as the functionality that we were looking for.”

Pablo continued, “We basically took the evaluation copies of the software, loaded them into our testing environment, and then compared the products feature-by-feature from an enterprise standpoint. It was important to get a picture of how we could manage the systems we would be rolling out. In the security features that Utimaco has, as well as the level of administrative features, Utimaco was the clear choice for us.”

At the conclusion of the evaluation, ITS licensed SafeGuard Easy and planned for long-term deployments on 800 individual computer systems. From the perspective of ITS, this effective, transparent encryption solution from Utimaco demonstrated clear advantages in protecting sensitive data without inconveniencing staff members.

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—Dale Pablo
Desktop Engineering Manager,
Information Technology Services at USF

Key Results

- Completed the first phase of a multi-phase initiative to protect data on computing devices using advanced encryption technology.
- Minimized the risk associated with staff members' lost personal computers and potential data security breaches related to network access.
- Deployed the SafeGuard Easy solution across the first set of 50 target computers with minimal disruption of user productivity and virtually transparent operation after installation.
- Streamlined the deployment process so encryption can be rapidly installed to staff members' new computers every three years.
- Increased the security of lost or stolen notebooks through the pre-boot authentication feature of SafeGuard Easy.



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Implementing the Utimaco Solution

As the implementation effort began, the ITS team swung into action, involving a number of staff members in the process. The Information Security Coordinator addressed communication issues relating to the solution deployment, at all levels throughout the university. Members of the Desktop Engineering team participated in the packaging and the repackaging of the software, while the VP of Information Technology provided oversight and governance during the entire process. The ITS team approached the implementation strategy cautiously and methodically, performing a complete backup of each computer before encrypting the data on it.

Once the backup strategy was in place and underway, the ITS group followed through on the next stage of the implementation: a small pilot program implemented using the Utimaco Active Directory group policies.

“It was a matter of working with the support folks at Utimaco,” Pablo said, “figuring out a deployment strategy that we could use enterprise-wide through the help of the Utimaco techs. They gave us a blueprint of how we could customize the software package, which we did. We then deployed SafeGuard Easy to a small test group. Performance-wise, since the installation, the presence of the encryption software hasn’t even been noticeable. The software is essentially transparent to the user.”

The customization, assisted by Utimaco technical staff members, helped management meet the USF requirements. “We wanted to implement an approach that would have minimal impact on users—to push the installation package out silently, so no user interaction is required. And, with the customization, that is what we got. The user doesn’t have to do anything manually.”

The initiative is proceeding quickly now that the first 50 members of the pilot project were set up with encryption. “We are still backing up quite a few people to participate in this enterprise storage project, which precedes the Utimaco project. Ultimately, we are looking at

including all our mobile Windows users. This includes everyone using a laptop. We will also roll out to specific desktop platforms. If a user has potentially confidential data that will be worked on locally, that data will be encrypted. In total, we are looking to install SafeGuard Easy on about 800 mobile devices.”

With the success of the initial deployment, ITS is considering the possibility of extending encryption to PDAs and smartphones, which are becoming increasingly popular on campus. Because these types of devices often contain confidential e-mail exchanges, password data, and other sensitive information, they also represent a weak point in an organization’s overall security strategy unless the data is protected through encryption.

An Important Component of Campus Security

The objective at USF—protecting sensitive data carried about the campus on notebook computers—has been accomplished securely and cost-effectively by applying full encryption to the entire notebook hard disk drive using SafeGuard Easy. This same level of protection applies to the workstation machines that were included in the ITS initiative.

Additional data security is ensured by means of a recently introduced SafeGuard Easy product feature—pre-boot authentication. By requiring a positive means of identifying the user—such as a fingerprint, a password, or an eToken—pre-boot authentication restricts notebook access to the owner. Notebook computers secured with SafeGuard Easy maintain the same consistent, best-practice level of protection even when the system goes in hibernation mode or is put into standby.

The deployment and use of SafeGuard Easy has been a positive experience at USF, and the staff members in the ITS group are investigating extending encryption coverage to removable media and handheld mobile devices using other solutions in the SafeGuard Easy family.

About Utimaco

Utimaco, the Data Security Company, is the leading provider of data security solutions. Utimaco enables midsize-to-large organizations to safeguard their data assets against attacks and to comply with privacy laws by protecting their confidentiality and integrity. The Personal Device Security division supplies technologies and solutions for mobile security in the areas of high-level authentication, including biometric techniques, encryption, and integrity checks, and the Transaction Security division specializes in security solutions for e-business, e-government, and e-payment.

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