Upper Arlington, Ohio takes on data security, management and analytics with DataGravity

CUSTOMER PROFILE

COMPANY:

City of Upper Arlington, Ohio

Location: Upper Arlington, Ohio
Industry: State and local government
Employees: 220 full time employees
Website: www.uaoh.net

Background

The City of Upper Arlington, a residential suburb of Columbus, Ohio, is home to more than 33,000 residents. Nestled between the Scioto River and Ohio State University, the 90-year-old city is just under 10 square miles, filled with a network of public schools, community parks and recreational facilities supporting a variety of community gatherings and seasonal celebrations. A four-person team supports all IT services and communications for the city, such as data, voice services and security for public organizations including the police and fire departments, public service department, finance department and more.

> *"DataGravity helps improve every interaction we have between our team and our data – in terms of security, governance, storage growth and more,"* said Granville Harris, IT director at the City of Upper Arlington.

BUSINESS NEED

- Protect sensitive data from malware and security attacks
- Enhance reporting and auditing of stored data
- Improve data storage ROI

SOLUTION

- DataGravity for Virtualization

BENEFITS

- Visibility into data provides assurance the community's sensitive data is safe from security risks
- Continuous monitoring and alerting of data usage improves policy enforcement, including onboarding new users
- IT team avoids storing and managing outdated, duplicate and potentially dangerous information

"It's hard to understand data when it's just a bunch of files and folders – and if you don't know what kind of data you have, you risk security attacks, potential lawsuits and liability issues," said Harris. "DataGravity helps our team overcome major challenges with securing, analyzing and cost-effectively storing our data."

The Problem

The city's IT team sought to dig into the five terabytes of stored data it had accumulated over many years. In doing so, they uncovered issues that were complicating data management processes: database files saved as Microsoft Word documents, stale and duplicate copies of data, and critical pieces of information scattered in disparate notes instead of within an organized system. Harris and his team wanted a simple way to audit data, create and share reports, and avoid security risks, such as ransomware attacks. The team had previously used a web crawler application to identify and manage the contents of its data, but the solution lacked a level of detail that could help secure sensitive information, like residential data, social security numbers, tax information and confidential police and fire reports. Because most of the data is transferred over the city's network, there was a concern that a single cyber attack or data breach could compromise or impact the privacy of its data storage.

The Solution

After testing DataGravity for Virtualization, the City of Upper Arlington adopted the solution due to its ease of use and depth of reporting. Almost immediately, the IT team identified instances of Cryptolocker affecting users in its system. The team restored relevant information from their backups, and then used DataGravity to set up ongoing alerts for future instances of malware, security attacks and general misuse of data.

The city's IT team relies on a VMware virtualized server environment and an underlying Nimble Storage system as its core IT infrastructure. DataGravity helps optimize the virtualized environment by analyzing usage that is causing data bloat and storage growth. To protect it, the city employs DataGravity to monitor data access patterns and content types to identify anomalous activity as well as Dell SecureWorks to be alerted of security concerns from incoming email attachments and potential phishing attacks.

The Results

Streamlined data management

Collaborating with the finance, police and fire departments, the City of Upper Arlington's IT team must ensure that users are managing their data appropriately. For state and local government agencies, data can quickly become outdated – and depending on its contents, pose a security risk. Using DataGravity, the City of Upper Arlington's IT team learned that 90 percent of its data was stale and the city's data storage costs and security posture were negatively affected. However, data-aware insights made it possible for the team to reverse the effects of both issues.

"DataGravity gives us the tools and resources to monitor and better manage data access," said Harris. "It's helped our IT department determine if a large amount of data is being accessed in a short time, which could be the result of a data breach or network virus."

Increased employee productivity

Prior to adopting DataGravity, one of the IT team's biggest challenges involved educating users about how to safely handle and manage data. The DataGravity solution was up and running within a couple of hours and soon helped automate management, alerting and auditing processes for the team. The resulting newfound productivity saves time and expenses for the city and simplifies the process of onboarding new users and employees.

"Cyber extortion, crisis management, public relations and business interruption expenses can be extremely costly," Harris said. With DataGravity, the City of Upper Arlington is able to better monitor and manage its data, and recognize unusual or suspicious activity.

Heightened data security

"Finding a breach is difficult in itself and most companies do not discover they've been hacked until months after the initial incident," said Harris. "When you manage data for a government agency, you're aware that if someone hacked your system and accessed confidential information – Social Security numbers, personally identifiable information and more – you're putting your own community at risk." DataGravity put a system in place that enables the City of Upper Arlington's employees, residents and greater community to remain secure and protected for years to come.

Conclusion

Insights delivered through DataGravity make it possible for a small IT team to provide more than 33,000 community members with reliable data security, safe data management, detailed auditing and reporting, and a cost-effective approach to limiting storage growth.

Get a free data security assessment from DataGravity today. Learn more›

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