

CASE STUDY: Allen County, OH

NetVision

Customer Profile

Allen County, located in the northwestern part of Ohio, has a population of more than 100,000 and covers a land area of 407 square miles.

Allen County's Information Technology audit environment consists of a cooperative dedicated fiber connection between the Allen County Sheriff's Department (ACSO), the courts, the prosecutor's office, the juvenile detention center, as well as all other related county departments. These are all housed in a centralized server/data environment with a remote disaster recovery site accessible to all participants.

The Challenge

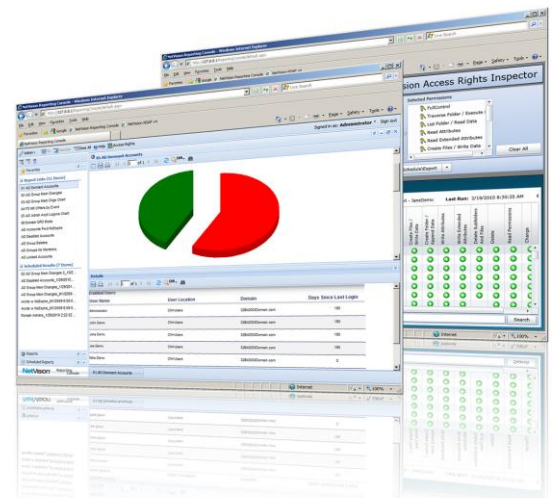
As a local government agency, Allen County Auditor's Office must protect many types of data to comply with federal and state regulations for data privacy—and do so with tight budget constraints.

The county is accountable for its network activity and responds to audit demands regularly. File access audits play a vital role in ensuring data integrity and access rights and the Allen County Auditor's Office recognized the need to gain control over its core network directories and file systems, which include more than 40 servers, 25 remote locations, and more than 1,500 total users on the network.

ASCO had been relying on Windows logs, but to resolve a multitude of audit and security issues throughout the county, the office decided to replace its existing log management system with one that could integrate tightly with Active Directory. ASCO wanted a solution that would enable the office to get access to vital information not available in the system logs, as well as to improve the office's security and audit-ability by monitoring and reporting on user activity. ASCO searched for a solution that provides an audit trail and user permissions for all file and server access across the county network.

The Solution

Information Technology Director Mark Smith works for the Allen County Auditor's Office and Deputy Isaac Dunifon with Allen County Sheriff's Communications Technology Department. Recognizing that Windows logs provided incomplete information and understanding that network directories were at the heart of ensuring data integrity and access rights, Smith and his department, with the help of the Allen County Sheriff's Office sought to implement a solution that would



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improve the security of their Windows File System and provide a better way to respond to external and internal audits of their Active Directory infrastructure. Moreover, Allen County required something that would provide the necessary audit trails of all file systems across the county network.

“The county network had relied on Windows logs for some time, but found them to be incomplete in terms of being able to properly identify user access and user rights,” said Dunifon. “We began looking for a solution that could provide us with those answers. Our overall goal was to have an audit trail and proper user right assignments for all file and server access across the county network.”

“When the appliance arrived at our location pre-configured, we utilized NetVision remote support to help us install it and integrate it into our specific environment... Overall the installation took less than eight hours.”

- Isaac Dunifon, ACSO

Smith and his department evaluated several technologies, but in the end found NetVision’s solutions to be the most well suited to the county’s needs. Allen County’s IT department particularly liked NetVision’s features as they related to Windows File System Security. Eventually, Allen County would also implement Active Directory monitoring. With no large integration efforts or specialized in-house expertise required, Allen County was able to easily integrate NetVision’s NVMonitor, NVAssess and Access Rights Inspector into its existing infrastructure and immediately begin getting answers about who had access to what resources and how they were able to gain that access.

The Results

NetVision’s solutions helped the county significantly improve operations and productivity by reducing the amount of man hours dedicated to audit response, while at the same time providing a full audit trail and proper user right assignments for all file and server access across the county network - security.

“With NetVision’s real-time monitoring in place, we’ve been able to reduce our oversight by at least 70%. NetVision quickly enables us to meet reporting requirements and presents data in very clear and understandable ways.”

Using NetVision’s NVMonitor, Dunifon is able to compare events to Allen County’s IT policies in real time. By automating real-time security event auditing and monitoring of its network directories, including its Active Directory infrastructure, NetVision’s solutions serve as a centralized platform for auditing of Allen County’s identity-related security controls, user behavior and the power granted to users on the network. It also enables independent event sampling, forensics, real-time response to serious security violations and detection of transient activity. The end result is reduced costs, improved audit integrity and increased security.

Allen County's IT members can now actively monitor, alert and report on changes to user objects, account status, group memberships or virtually any policy violation in real time and remediate events or security breaches on the fly. As a result, the Sheriff's Department was able to track down a malicious employee and then shut down the appliance to preserve evidence.

With NetVision's NVAssess, Smith can automate periodic security audits of the department's Active Directory and Windows file systems by comparing the actual information stored within its directories and file servers to organizational security policies. User provisioning, role management, access control, password management and other identity management

“NetVision integration with Active Directory has saved us a ton of time and increased our network management efficiency. I can't say enough about the reporting features of NetVision. Not only are they easy to run, but easy to read as well.”

- Isaac Dunifon, ACSO

processes can all be automatically audited from a single, unified console. NetVision reports analyze passwords, access history, group memberships, system configurations, and a range of other identity variables. By auditing actual identity information stored within its directories – rather than the individual systems (provisioning, etc.) and applications (SAP, etc.) designed to control those values – NetVision helps the Allen County Auditor's Office reduce its costs, improve its audit integrity, and reduce organizational risk.

NetVision's Access Rights Inspector provides detailed answers on access rights across Active Directory and Windows file system environments. ASCO has found its real-time monitoring and alerting capabilities, which send out immediate alerts when sensitive files or folders are opened or updated, to be particularly useful. The ability to generate reports or alerts on who, when, what, where, and how, has provided tremendous value in enabling Dunifon and his department to attest to permissions on a more regular basis.

NetVision

NetVision offers access rights reporting solutions that enable organizations to easily and automatically obtain the most relevant and actionable information needed to protect their assets, mitigate risk, and reduce the cost and complexity of compliance and audit. NetVision's patented technology platform combines advanced event filtering with real-time monitoring, from-the-source data collection and a powerful and flexible reporting engine to deliver immediate answers to critical identity and access rights questions. Since the company's founding in 1995, more than 600 companies around the world have used NetVision to improve security, reduce risk, and enhance operational efficiency. For more information, visit www.netvision.com.