

A U.S. electric utility

Protecting the power grid with policy-based identity and access management

Overview

The need

After separating its grid operations from its corporate network, IT staff at a U.S. electric utility needed to centrally manage user access across both networks and rapidly onboard contractors.

The solution

PathMaker Group helped the utility implement identity and access management solutions from IBM that help staff easily administer, manage and monitor user access across its complex environment.

The benefit

This centralized, automated solution reduces the time to onboard new users, protects sensitive assets, decreases the cost of compliance efforts, and helps staff track compliance in near-real time.

This U.S. electric utility serves more than half a million customers in its region.

Protecting the power grid

As a utility company, one of this electric utility's security challenges is preventing unauthorized access to its power grid. To help protect its grid, IT staff sought to divide its operations network, which runs the power grid, from its corporate network, which supports general business activities. As the organization worked with IBM Business Partner PathMaker Group to separate the networks, it needed the ability to centrally manage user access and rapidly onboard contractors across the environment. "We wanted to onboard users with the right access as close to day one as possible," says the electric utility's IT security systems manager.

Confirming the right access to the right systems

PathMaker Group recommended IBM identity and access management solutions for their ability to safeguard user access and handle the complexities of the electric utility's environment. "IBM solutions help the electric utility confirm that users are who they say they are and that they have the right privileges for their jobs," says Chris Fields, vice president, Security Strategy, PathMaker Group. "These tools are at the forefront of the industry."

As part of its work, PathMaker Group developed and integrated a contractor management application with IBM identity management software. "This integration helps us ensure that when contractors leave, they no longer have access to our systems," says the IT security systems manager for a U.S. electric utility.



Provisioning and deprovisioning of user identities is automated based on business policies, user roles, and contract service dates so that users are automatically removed from the system once they leave the company. Managers are notified prior to contract end dates in case recertification is needed. Compliance alerts help IT staff confirm adherence to industry guidelines. “We can track compliance in near-real time rather than waiting for audits to catch issues,” says the electric utility’s IT security systems manager.

Reducing the time and cost of compliance efforts

With the IBM solution, the time needed to provision and deprovision accounts has decreased substantially. “Accounts are setup long before users even show up for the first day of work and deprovisioning is handled automatically,” says the electric utility’s IT security systems manager.

In addition, compliance reporting for internal audits as well as external guidelines, such as the North American Electric Reliability Corporation Critical Infrastructure Protection (NERC CIP) standards, is also much faster. “We’ve reduced the time and effort that we spend producing reports for audits, thus reducing the cost for our audit and compliance efforts,” says the organization’s IT security systems manager.

Solution components

Software

- IBM® Security Access Manager for Mobile
- IBM Security Access Manager for Web
- IBM Security Identity Manager
- IBM Federated Identity Manager

IBM Business Partner

- PathMaker Group

Take the next step

To learn more about IBM Security software, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/security

For more information about PathMaker Group, visit: www.pathmaker-group.com

Statement of Good Security Practices: IT system security involves protecting systems and information through prevention, detection and response to improper access from within and outside your enterprise. Improper access can result in information being altered, destroyed, misappropriated or misused or can result in damage to or misuse of your systems, including for use in attacks on others. No IT system or product should be considered completely secure and no single product, service or security measure can be completely effective in preventing improper use or access. IBM systems, products and services are designed to be part of a lawful, comprehensive security approach, which will necessarily involve additional operational procedures, and may require other systems, products or services to be most effective. IBM DOES NOT WARRANT THAT ANY SYSTEMS, PRODUCTS OR SERVICES ARE IMMUNE FROM, OR WILL MAKE YOUR ENTERPRISE IMMUNE FROM, THE MALICIOUS OR ILLEGAL CONDUCT OF ANY PARTY.



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2015

IBM Security
Route 100
Somers, NY 10589

Produced in the United States of America
July 2015

IBM, the IBM logo, and ibm.com are trademarks of International Business Machines Corp., registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. Other product and service names might be trademarks of IBM or other companies. A current list of IBM trademarks is available on the web at “Copyright and trademark information” at ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml

This document is current as of the initial date of publication and may be changed by IBM at any time. Not all offerings are available in every country in which IBM operates.

The performance data and client examples cited are presented for illustrative purposes only. Actual performance results may vary depending on specific configurations and operating conditions.

It is the user’s responsibility to evaluate and verify the operation of any other products or programs with IBM products and programs.

THE INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED “AS IS” WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING WITHOUT ANY WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND ANY WARRANTY OR CONDITION OF NON-INFRINGEMENT. IBM products are warranted according to the terms and conditions of the agreements under which they are provided.

The client is responsible for ensuring compliance with laws and regulations applicable to it. IBM does not provide legal advice or represent or warrant that its services or products will ensure that the client is in compliance with any law or regulation.



Please Recycle