

Henry M. Jackson Foundation Finds the Password for Productive Military Medicine Research



INTRODUCTION

The Henry M. Jackson Foundation (HJF) for the Advancement of Military Medicine is extraordinarily dedicated to supporting not only the armed forces, but also the health of the public at large. A private, not-for-profit organization, the HJF plays a unique role in bringing together global resources and expertise to support more than 1,000 research projects in areas as diverse as infectious diseases, deployment-related health issues, brain and neurological disorders, biological defense and disaster preparedness, and cancer.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

With a vital mission, it was all the more frustrating for the HJF's 1,700 employees to have to memorize multiple application passwords to do their work. As the number of application passwords grew, so did calls to the organization's IT helpdesk seeking resets to forgotten passwords. Many employees resorted to writing down their passwords in places where they could be easily copied and used by unauthorized individuals—thereby putting the security of confidential data at risk.

IT security had become a growing concern for the HJF and its director of IT infrastructure, Michael Wilson. Although the organization is not bound by the regulations of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Wilson and his colleagues believe it is good practice to comply and follow guidelines wherever possible. Therefore, the IT organization has established internal policies that limit user access to certain systems, and the Foundation is audited on a regular basis.

In light of these concerns and complaints, Wilson and his team began investigating possible remedies. Their interest quickly turned to single sign-on (SSO) solutions.

The organization reviewed solutions from several vendors before selecting Imprivata OneSign® Single Sign-On. For Wilson, the choice of Imprivata OneSign SSO came down to one significant advantage: ease of use. He and his team found Imprivata OneSign to be the easiest solution to use in all aspects, from initial deployment to end-user training to ongoing administration. "It's all drag-and-drop, set-and-forget," said Wilson. "There is nothing easier."

THE IMPRIVATA ONESIGN SOLUTION

Imprivata OneSign's appliance packaging was also a big factor. "I like the idea of a single-purpose device that's optimized to perform one function," said Wilson. "It reduces error, controls the environment, and won't get corrupted."

The HJF team was equally pleased to discover that Imprivata OneSign is an enterprise-wide solution that could SSO-enable all 20 applications initially targeted in the IT, purchasing, accounting, human resources, legal, administrative, finance, and program management departments. Wilson and his colleagues intended to deploy Imprivata OneSign SSO to approximately 250 to 300 users at all levels of the organization in a phased approach.

The real test came when the HJF began deployment. A team of five IT staffers was assigned to the project, and they began rolling out the Imprivata OneSign solution



COMPANY

- Supports more than 1,000 research projects
- 1,700 employees

INDUSTRY

- Healthcare

CHALLENGES

- Overburdened helpdesk
- Could not track or report on user access events

RESULTS

- Workflows improve
- Tracking capabilities improve

BEFORE IMPRIVATA ONESIGN	AFTER IMPRIVATA ONESIGN
End-users and IT staff frustrated by passwords	End-user productivity improvements
Unable to report on access events for audit purposes	Ability to track user access
Lacked IT security infrastructure	IT platform integrates easily with SSO, provisioning, strong authentication and physical/logical convergence

one department at a time. The rollout went surprisingly well. “They received no resistance from the users,” said Wilson. “No more than 30 minutes of training was required and, in general, the users have all been pleased.”

THE RESULTS

Imprivata OneSign SSO has eliminated the organization’s password management headaches and reduced helpdesk calls and related costs, all while tightening IT security at the desktop level throughout the organization. Imprivata OneSign SSO has also given HJF a new tool for tracking and identifying any unusual user behavior. “With Imprivata OneSign SSO’s monitoring and reporting capabilities, we can easily track who has access to what applications and prove that access with accurate, comprehensive reports when an audit takes place,” said Wilson.

After all the research, deliberation, and planning, the HJF team discovered that an enterprise-wide SSO deployment need not be disruptive and arduous. “Imprivata’s appliance-based solution makes single sign-on extremely simple because once it is installed, you can essentially forget about it—it works that smoothly,” explained Wilson. “We are very pleased with our investment in Imprivata OneSign.”

For Wilson and the rest of the HJF IT organization, Imprivata OneSign SSO is the first step in a long-term IT security strategy. “Right now, we’re considering provisioning and context management,” reported Wilson. Having the Imprivata OneSign platform in place will allow the HJF to add new capabilities, such as strong authentication, later on. “We can also see the benefit of using Imprivata OneSign to facilitate the convergence of our physical and IT security systems sometime in the future.”

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*—Michael Wilson
Director of IT
Infrastructure
Henry M. Jackson
Foundation*