

The Staffordshire Police Lock Up Password Issues



INTRODUCTION

Police information security offices face some of the biggest IT security challenges in any sector due to the wide variety of application types in use within their organisations, ranging from mobile and terminal emulation applications using Citrix, to internally developed Web-based applications. Due to the sensitive nature of the information stored in IT systems, a variety of passwords must be used to access each application. Forgetting these passwords can be particularly frustrating for staff, and it ultimately leads to a loss of productivity. This challenge was encountered by Staffordshire Police, which employs approximately 4,500 police officers and support staff.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Staffordshire Police's IT department runs more than 45 different applications, each requiring complex, dynamic passwords. On average, each user at Staffordshire Police had to remember at least six different usernames and passwords for various applications including HOLMES2 (used in police investigations), STORM (Police Command and Control), SPIN (Intelligence) and FPS (Family Protection). In addition, over the past 12 months police forces were up against increasing pressure from the Home Office and organisations such as PITO (the Police Information Technology Organisation) and ACPO (the Association of Chief Police Officers) to adopt strong password policies. Police IT departments also began to follow this best practice with internally developed applications, resulting in a wide-spread requirement for single sign-on (SSO) solutions.

"Due to the confidential nature of the information being accessed, police are required to use complex passwords consisting of letters, numbers and characters," explained Phil Lovell, ICT director at Staffordshire Police. "This policy, combined with the fact that passwords must be changed frequently, has reduced police productivity and put a strain on our IT helpdesk, with 40 percent of all calls relating to password issues."

THE IMPRIVATA ONESIGN SOLUTION

After following a successful pilot, Staffordshire Police found Imprivata OneSign® Single Sign-On to be the only solution able to handle all of its requirements. With Imprivata OneSign SSO, Staffordshire Police officers and support staff only have to remember one secure password to access every application they require to do their jobs effectively. Upon implementation, Staffordshire Police became the first police force in the UK to achieve complete single sign-on for all internal and external applications.

"As a public safety organisation, we have to be confident in the technology we implement to ensure that we are able to serve the public effectively in the event of a crisis," said Lovell. "In pilot testing, we rolled out Imprivata OneSign SSO to half of the staff that manages emergency calls and kept the other half operating on existing technology to ensure that calls would continue to be answered in case any issues arose. In just two weeks, we had completed our initial pilot scheme with no problems and were easily able to introduce the technology to new users with minimal training, resulting in both cost and time savings. We're currently rolling out Imprivata OneSign ESSO for our entire user population of 4,500 staff, all of whom have truly welcomed this new technology."



COMPANY

- 4,500 employed police officers
- Uses more than 45 applications

INDUSTRY

- Government

APPLICATIONS

- HOLMES2, STORM, SPIN, FPS

CHALLENGES

- Not compliant with password policies
- Decrease in productivity
- Overburdened helpdesk

RESULTS

- Secured access to applications
- Decreased reset calls to helpdesk
- Increased productivity

BEFORE IMPRIVATA ONESIGN	AFTER IMPRIVATA ONESIGN
Needed to adopt strong password policies	Have achieved complete SSO for all internal and external applications
Users were frustrated by complex, changing passwords for 45 different applications	Helpdesk can focus on priority calls rather than password resets
Users were frequently locked out of applications, causing access delays, and increasing the burden on the IT helpdesk	Officers and staff have one secure password to access all applications, increasing productivity

THE RESULTS

Unlike other solutions on the market, Imprivata was able to successfully manage Staffordshire Police’s complex application and IT environment which contained a strong set of password policies. With Imprivata OneSign, Staffordshire Police became the first police force to achieve true single sign-on capability while having successfully demonstrated suitability against both internally and externally developed applications. Moving forward, all ongoing password changes will be instantly handled by Imprivata OneSign, increasing productivity by relieving helpdesk staff of time-consuming password resets and support and giving users only one password to remember.

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*—Phil Lovell
ICT Director
Staffordshire Police*

