

City of Miami Beach Improves Public Safety and Boosts Productivity



INTRODUCTION

When a fire call comes in at 3 a.m., there's no time for password hassles. Yet government entities are increasingly facing a paradox: serving the public requires unimpeded access to disparate software applications, while maintaining information security requires ever more complex login routines. Such was the case for the City of Miami Beach, a 24/7 municipality with a year-round population of about 90,000 that regularly triples to 300,000 or more.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

"Managing multiple passwords with different complexity rules was getting out of hand for certain departments," says Nelson Martinez Jr., systems support manager for the City of Miami Beach. "People were writing down passwords in PDAs or notebooks and whipping out pieces of paper to remember passwords." Not surprisingly, password reset requests were jamming helpdesk lines as well.

Like many governmental organizations, the challenge wasn't just password consolidation, it was finding a solution compatible with specialized niche applications that are ubiquitous in local government environments. Architecturally, such applications are often atypical or outdated, creating multiple implementation headaches.

With password hurdles mounting, Martinez began looking for single sign-on (SSO) options late in 2005. "About that time I received a flyer in the mail from Imprivata for a purpose-built appliance called Imprivata OneSign[®]," he recalls. "I'd never heard of it, but an appliance-based product caught my eye."

THE IMPRIVATA ONESIGN SOLUTION

In all, Martinez researched multiple offerings, in addition to Imprivata OneSign. "With the exception of Imprivata, the others would have required considerable effort to implement in our environment," explains Martinez. "And we needed a solution that wouldn't create a lot of churn or uproot other systems."

To evaluate Imprivata OneSign, Martinez requested a mini-pilot. "We wanted something that would kill multiple birds with one stone—from reducing reset requests to assisting with multiple profiles for niche apps and legacy systems," Martinez emphasizes. "We also wanted self-service features that helped users of all types from all divisions within the city government gain confidence and have a better experience. During the hands-on testing, it was clear that Imprivata OneSign fit the bill."

In addition, Miami Beach was impressed with Imprivata OneSign's built-in capability to integrate biometric devices. "We decided to deploy fingerprint readers in IT initially, and then offered them to departments throughout the city," says Martinez.

Imprivata OneSign was implemented in mid-2006. This included niche applications, legacy systems, and fingerprint biometrics readers. "Although the Imprivata OneSign appliance was configured within hours, we were completely up and running in under two weeks," Martinez says. "Then we rolled-out Imprivata OneSign to users in a phased approach. We posted a FAQ on our intranet and conducted hands-on training

COMPANY

- Municipality population of 90,000
- Serves year-round population 300,000

INDUSTRY

- Government

APPLICATIONS

- Zenworks, Remedy

CHALLENGES

- Multiple passwords impacted productivity
- High volume of after-hours reset calls
- Helpdesk consumed with password resets

RESULTS

- Improved workflows and increased productivity
- Password reset calls eliminated
- Helpdesk resources focus on Level One calls

BEFORE IMPRIVATA ONESIGN	AFTER IMPRIVATA ONESIGN
Multiple passwords with different complexity rules were unmanageable and impacted productivity for certain departments	User workflow improvements and productivity gains
High volume of after-hour password resets	Workforce empowered with self-service password management, which eliminated reset request calls to the helpdesk
Reset requests took too much time away from other helpdesk calls	Helpdesk resources can focus on Level One support calls

to achieve buy-in. We finished the entire rollout in less than four months and it has worked great ever since."

THE RESULTS

"Now supporting 1,800 users, Imprivata OneSign has slowed password reset requests to a trickle. With fewer resets, IT can now focus on the more critical Level One support calls. And we rarely get any reset calls in the middle of the night anymore."

Imprivata OneSign's biometric capabilities are also standing out. "We've used the fingerprint readers from the beginning and they're excellent devices," Martinez enthuses. "We've rolled them out to all of our third level supervisors and above."

"Next comes beefing up mobile computing" says Martinez. "The beauty of Imprivata OneSign's biometrics is that laptop users can disconnect from the network, where their fingerprint is identified, and OneSign seamlessly allows them to use a typed login instead."

Indeed, Imprivata OneSign's deployment has enabled Miami Beach to start ordering laptops with built-in readers. "In addition to traditional mobile employees like police, fire safety, and code enforcement, we'll be eventually providing laptops to make others more productive," Martinez explains.

Finally, Imprivata OneSign is assisting with resiliency at Miami Beach, where a major disaster recovery initiative is underway. "We're moving toward an emphasis on business continuity where everything at our co-location is hot, spinning, and available," says Martinez, who represents the city of Miami Beach on a state-wide task force that is adapting corporate enterprise standards for government use. "Our distant hot site will allow the city to keep working even if our data center goes, and Imprivata OneSign will definitely play a role."

At an organization charged with serving the public and delivering taxpayer value, Imprivata OneSign has proven to be an excellent fit, Martinez emphasizes. "Imprivata OneSign has improved productivity throughout city departments because people aren't sitting around waiting for a simple password reset," he says. "Best of all, our users are ecstatic."

"Imprivata OneSign works great in our heterogeneous IT environment, and the fingerprint readers are excellent. Best of all, our users are ecstatic."

*— Nelson Martinez Jr.,
Systems Support Manager
City of Miami Beach*