Washington County Protects PII and Receives Highest Rankings for Information Security

netwrlx

Customer
Washington County, Arkansas

Industry
Government

Website
www.co.washington.ar.us

Netwrix Auditor Applications
Netwrix Auditor for Active Directory, Windows Server and Windows File Servers

Customer Profile

Washington County is in the northwest corner of Arkansas in the Ozark Mountains. Since it was established on October 17, 1828, the county has grown from small settlements of farms, mills and orchards into one of the most affluent and prosperous counties in the state. Washington County's Office of Information Technology provides the highest quality technology-based services in the most cost-effective manner to facilitate the county's mission as it applies to management, learning and community service.

THE CHALLENGE

The Administration of Washington County stores a variety of data, from vendor contracts to personally identifiable information (PII). One of the main challenges of the Information Systems (IS) Department is to ensure the integrity of that data, which is entrusted to the county by citizens and employees and handled by 34 departments of the agency. Another key challenge is ensuring continuous compliance with various state regulatory requirements, HIPAA being one of them. Failure to secure the data and comply with the standards and guidelines could cost the Administration thousands of dollars in fines.

NETWRIX SOLUTION

John Adams, IT Director at Washington County Information Systems Department, listed the most important features that made Netwrix Auditor stand out among other solutions: "Ease of use and cost were the primary differentiators. We didn't need consultants to deploy Netwrix Auditor; we could do it with our own resources. Compared to some other products that we tried, Netwrix Auditor's reports are easier to read and the GUI is more user friendly." The team has achieved the following results:

Increased operational stability, business continuity and efficient user support. With 1,700 users across 34 departments to support and an average of 3,000 helpdesk calls per year, the IS department has a lot to deal with on a daily basis. The IT team uses Netwrix Auditor to quickly see what changes have happened, what was affected and who was behind the change. They can quickly find out why a particular system has failed or what happened to missing files — for instance, who moved or deleted a contract or form. Netwrix Auditor's reports and the Interactive Search feature provide detailed information about issues and enable the team to resolve them faster, before they impact user productivity and stifle business activity.

Validation of security policies. Netwrix Auditor also supports information security by enabling the Security Operations team to monitor server configuration changes, Group Policy changes, privileged user activity, logons, password changes, user account lockouts and more to make sure that the IT environment is secure. The team also performs daily reviews of user activity and changes across file servers, where the majority of sensitive data is stored, paying special attention to permissions changes and file modifications, deletions and moves. With Netwrix Auditor, the team can now easily identify anomalies and coordinate with IT staff to understand whether they were planned or might be problematic. If investigation is needed, the tool helps the team find the root cause of an incident and details such as who made what change, when and where.

Continuous compliance with regulatory requirements and less stressful audits. The IS team deals with a number of regulatory standards, including HIPAA, and authorities such as the Arkansas Legislative Joint Auditing Committee. Audits are typically conducted every year and last for several months. During that period, compliance auditors can request a wide range of information. Thanks to Netwrix Auditor, the IS team can quickly and effortlessly find any required information with the Interactive Search feature or generate reports that prove all required policies have been in place.

KEY BENEFITS

- Control over user activity across the IT environment
- Quick troubleshooting of issues
- Minimized risk of insider misuse
- Compliance with the regulatory standards and state guidelines for protecting PII

Learn more about Netwrix Auditor

Since the Netwrix Auditor deployment, Washington County has been recognized as the most progressive county in the state of Arkansas for information security. It has helped us on a number of occasions to proactively deal with potential security incidents, such as a sub-contractor's violation of permissions, and minimize user impact on our security. We also really enjoyed the support provided by Netwrix; we quickly got to the meat of all opportunities offered by the software and achieved great results.

**John Adams,
IT Director,
Washington County Information Systems Department**