



Group 4 Securicor France

Profile

- World leader in private security.
- Offers a wide range of security services.

Users

- 470,000 persons in over 100 countries.
- In France, 8200 persons work in a network of 51 branches.

Challenges

- Reduce the number of passwords.
- Reinforce the security policy.
- Comply with the group's standards.

Benefits

- Very quick implementation.
- Help-desk productivity increased by 30%.
- Password burden removed from the end-users.

Vincent Girardin, IT Manager of G4S France, explain why his company chose Evidian's SSO solution.

What is the IT infrastructure of G4S?

"All the business and back-office applications are accessed through thin clients. 500 users work simultaneously on a farm of 15 servers. This farm is located in our Rouen headquarters, which is backed up by another site outside Rouen."

What were the security needs of G4S?

"In view of the ever-growing number of applications in the company and the projected deployments of new applications, password management was becoming a source of permanent headache for users. Our employees had to memorize an increasing number of logins and passwords; the GS4 hotline was called each time the logins were forgotten or the passwords needed to be reset. Users ended up writing down their passwords on Post-it® notes beside their screen or in their diary: we just couldn't go on like that.

Our business sector is very competitive, and we have high middle management turnover. It became crucial to reinforce access security in order to avoid information leakage to our competitors. Moreover, we had to comply with the group's security recommendations and specifications, which are generally stricter than the security requirements in France."

Why did you decide to deploy SSO?

"Inside the company, many think that single sign-on (SSO) mostly improves user comfort as it frees employees from managing several logins and passwords. However, SSO also brings in real IT-service-productivity and security-policy gains. In terms of IT services, G4S can confirm the industry studies that indicate that SSO reduces help-desk load by up to 30%. Analyses have shown that without SSO, 30% of help-desk calls would concern the loss of a login or password.

In terms of security policy, SSO limits the number of passwords that are trivial, or displayed on a Post-it® note on the screen. Furthermore, SSO hides application passwords from end-users. Users only know their primary password or their smart card's PIN. There is no security breach any more when the primary password or smartcard is deactivated: the users concerned are no longer able to use their former applications from any available PC. The certificates associated with smart cards are also used to encrypt the content of the laptops of sensitive company staff; this was also a strong management recommendation."

Which modules did you choose?

"We chose Evidian's Enterprise SSO offer, which brings in extended SSO functions that work with all types of architectures such as LDAP directories and multi-directories, PCs that do not run Windows 2000 or XP, and thin client PCs. Moreover, it is a gateway to advanced functions such as identity management and provisioning. The SSO solution works with a smart card system, with deployment of a PKI.

The targeted security level required a dedicated security server with a "safe" that stores the passwords and the group's security policy rules. An intranet portal developed by Evidian manages forgotten passwords and remote assignment of smartcards."

How did you deploy the solution?

"A consultant from Evidian's expertise center provided the following services:

- Installing the solution, training
- Adjusting and configuring the solution
- Adapting the solution to our applications using Evidian's graphical SSO configuration tool and administration console.

Full deployment of the solution took three months. It was completed in two phases, with a total of 500 users and 42 applications, including the group's security rules. In the beginning the solution was deployed on 200 users then was extended to 500 users."

Which benefits have you seen for G4S?

"The Evidian solution enabled us to meet our group's security requirements within a very short time. The reasons: it is a modular, simple and all-in-one offer.

Security is ensured and audited within our information system. Our help desk is relieved of numerous calls due to forgotten passwords, e.g. when users return from vacation. Users are now autonomous thanks to the web portal they use to reset passwords.

The helpdesk thus provides more services with the same amount of resources. Users are relieved of the burden of having to memorize multiple passwords. I dare not imagine their reaction if we ever deactivated this function."

Beyond products, what differentiators did Evidian provide?

"Evidian offered more support services as well as additional modules, such as provisioning, which we will use to complement the current solution later on."

Which solutions are you planning to deploy in future?

"We intend to add Evidian's provisioning module and the software high availability solution."

"For us, Evidian's identity and access management software is one of the rare solutions on the market that offer all the elements required to build a secure management system in terms of application access. This is why we chose Evidian's SSO solution; we share the opinion of Gartner Group's analysts on this issue."

Vincent Girardin,
IT Manager,
G4S France.