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Maricopa County Relies on McAfee CASB Solution for Cloud Governance and Security

Maricopa County

Customer Profile
With 15,000 employees, the Maricopa County, Arizona local government office serves the fourth largest county in the US, with a population of more than 3 million people.

Industry
State local government

Maricopa County leverages the McAfee® Skyhigh Security Cloud FedRAMP-certified cloud access security broker (CASB) technology to add cloud governance and security to their existing, sophisticated infrastructure.

Connect With Us

Maricopa County is the largest county in the state of Arizona and the fourth largest in the US, with more than 3.8 million in population and more than 15,000 employees. With a vast network of users, David Stevens, CIO for Maricopa County, wanted to fully understand and govern where their data is going and who had access to it, as it is essential to maintaining the agency's security.

"We needed to be able to understand our cloud usage so we could reduce our risk, educate our users, and provide them with a safer mode to do business" says Stevens. "We knew a CASB would give us the actionable data we needed."

Reducing Risk Through User Education and Threat Detection

"We had customers who were using cloud services for legitimate business needs," says Stevens. "Now, we have better visibility to redirect them to safer services—those that are not associated with malware or don't have high-risk attributes. As a result, we have reduced our risk exposure."

In addition to understanding the types of services being used, it was important for Stevens and his team at Maricopa County to fully understand the risk associated with each service and restrict access to providers that were considered high risk or known to be associated with malware.

"We were reliant on our proxy servers to categorize and block anything that was considered to be malicious based on a set threat tolerance," says Stevens. "We found that the McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud model provides us more insight into what the threats actually are, and supplements our threat intelligence by providing specific data about what people are accessing, allowing us to mitigate the risk of malicious actors."

Upon deploying McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud into their ecosystem, Stevens was surprised to discover that there were more than 500 different cloud services in use across the business at Maricopa County.

"I didn't realize there were so many different cloud services," he says. "I knew we would see some of the big ones, but without the visibility McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud for Shadow IT provides us, I would have never known about the rest."

With insight into cloud usage at Maricopa County, Stevens is able to enforce effective risk-based governance policies by blocking high-risk services more thoroughly than through proxy servers alone, uncover gaps caused by inconsistent configurations for new cloud service URLs, and set alerts for suspicious activity that may be caused by an insider threat or a compromised account.

Challenges
- Proxy categorization of services based on URL led to insufficient blocking of malware and high-risk services
- Vast existing infrastructure requires frictionless integration across multiple solutions and business units for core functionality
- Lacked visibility into cloud use and risk, data access, and traffic

Solution
- McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud for Shadow IT

Figure 1. Cloud usage analytics visually summarize key usage statistics and usage over time.

According to Stevens, his team has come across a handful of anomalous behaviors that have triggered alerts. Fortunately, the activity turned out to be non-malicious in nature, but he has used the alerts as an opportunity to close security gaps and enforce consistent policies across their existing infrastructure.

Enabling the Cloud to Close the IT Services Gap

Over the past few years, the team at Maricopa County has been reviewing and quantifying cloud usage across the agency's business to understand how to best enable their customers.

"Skyhigh provides insight into the IT service gap," says Stevens. "This enables us to find trends and patterns so we can provide better services to our customers and make better choices for our long-term strategic planning and investments."

With a large and sophisticated existing infrastructure, it was important to the team that new technologies were able to integrate without any added friction. "We have been able to seamlessly integrate McAfee Skyhigh Security Cloud with our single sign-on provider, our Active Directory, and our proxy, giving our existing platforms a higher level of cloud intelligence," says Stevens.

This level of integration has allowed Stevens and his team to apply new categories and tagging capabilities to their dashboard, enabling them to apply customized cloud governance policies and access controls for different business units within the agency.

Results
- Comprehensive tagging and blocking of malware and high-risk services led to an overall reduction in risk across the agency and the ability to enforce risk-based cloud governance policies.
- Seamless integration with existing infrastructure increased cloud intelligence and provided a better understanding of customer behavior, helping reduce security risks while enabling customers and supporting the long-term IT strategy.
- Visibility into cloud usage and traffic was enhanced with customized access controls and cloud governance policies for multiple business units across the agency.

"The additional visibility we have received into the types of services being used and where our data is going has further supported the adoption of cloud technologies," he says. The customized controls allow for further evaluation of the IT services gap.

"As a result of the data and learning we are doing, we have the actionable information we need to proactively propose new solutions and help close the services gap as we move forward on our cloud journey," says Stevens.
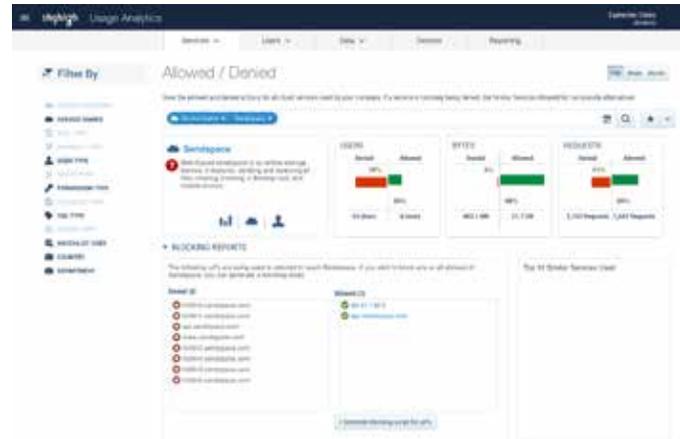

Figure 2. Cloud enforcement gap analysis presents allowed and denied statistics and highlights gaps in policy enforcement.

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—David Stevens, Chief Information Officer, Maricopa County

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