



Retail Grocery Chain

Major retail grocery chain achieves PCI DSS compliance and extends the life of its retail systems, saving millions of dollars in capital expenditure costs.

Summary

This \$2 billion retail grocery chain is a staple in communities in the United States. With 375 supermarkets, the grocery chain offers its customers the highest quality groceries at affordable prices. To keep costs in line, the supermarket chain is conscious about extracting the most out of its IT investments while at the same time providing superior protection of its customer data. Therefore, the company chose Bit9 Parity application whitelisting to meet the requirements of the Payment Card Industry's Data Security Standard and to proactively lock down servers and retail systems from malware, data leakage and unauthorized software.

The Challenge

Retail systems pose a serious security challenge as they are often targeted by malicious hackers for their role in handling sensitive and valuable credit card data. Most companies are unable to easily control what applications and devices run on these machines. As well, organizations struggle to affordably and efficiently send antivirus signature updates to retail systems or control the use of portable storage devices on these systems. This leaves them incredibly vulnerable to targeted attacks, the installation of unauthorized software and the copying of confidential information.

The grocery retailer itself has more than 3,500 Windows 2000 servers and workstations running mission-critical applications that interact with the cash registers, scanning wands and gas pumps. The company's outsourcers develop and update the applications, which are remotely pushed out to the machines and then executed via scripts.

To monitor these machines, the grocery chain used traditional anti-virus software. However, keeping each of the more than 3,500 servers and workstations current with the latest signatures proved not only taxing for off-site IT personnel, but also for the systems themselves, which often stalled out under the burden of the updates. At times, the IT department reported that the anti-virus software was "pounding" each machine with signature updates to the point that the machines were no longer functional.

Yet PCI DSS requires that the retailer be able to prove that these machines are protected at all times from malware, data leakage and unauthorized software. To accommodate this requirement, the company would have been forced to carry out a "forklift" upgrade to each machine's hardware, operating system and even applications—an incredibly costly endeavor for an environment that was otherwise stable.

INDUSTRY

Retail

CUSTOMER

Retail grocery chain and subsidiary of European-based food giant

ENVIRONMENT

The grocery retailer has more than 3,500 servers and workstations spread across 375 stores in the United States

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The grocery chain needed to quickly demonstrate PCI DSS compliance by securing servers and workstations to run only authorized software without "forklift" infrastructure, operating system and application upgrades.

SOLUTION

Bit9 Parity

BENEFITS

- Able to proactively lock down servers and workstations and protect retail systems from malware, data leakage and unauthorized software
- No longer experience slowdowns and problems due to signature updates
- Avoided millions of dollars in capital expenditure costs by extending the life of current IT investments

"We are committed to securing our corporate infrastructure as well as our in-store systems in order to protect our customers. We recognized that the 'after the fact' approach offered by antivirus is no longer the most effective way to secure our systems and our customers," said the Vice President & Global Information Security Officer of the European-based food giant.

The Solution

The grocery retailer chose Bit9 Parity to proactively protect its retail store systems from malware, data leakage and unauthorized software. Bit9 Parity was instrumental in ensuring the company's PCI DSS compliance without incurring millions of dollars in unnecessary costs.

With Bit9 Parity, the grocery chain was able to retain its Windows 2000 environment yet still guarantee that only trusted applications are running on each machine. Instead of taxing server and workstation processor resources with signature updates, Bit9 Parity only allows whitelisted applications onto the machines. IT teams can identify and decide which applications and devices are approved and appropriate to run in their environment, while blocking any unauthorized software or storage devices. This approach goes beyond the basic security requirements in PCI DSS by eliminating all risks associated with unwanted software, including targeted and zero-day attacks for which no signatures exist.

For instance, whenever the company's developers create a new application or update, they must first put it in a directory where it can be approved and placed on a whitelist. This verifies the integrity of the application and leaves a trail for auditors.

Bit9 Parity empowers IT teams to remotely check the status of in-store machines, something IT was unable to do before. This unparalleled visibility means that they can ensure all machines are online, properly configured and working correctly. This information is automatically integrated with their network monitoring tools so they do not need to pour through multiple logs.

End result

Since their rapid eight-week rollout of Bit9 Parity, this large grocery retailer has seen immediate results, including their proven compliance with PCI DSS. In addition, they've been able to bring all machines online and up to date, ensuring maximum revenue from business-critical applications.

Most importantly, the company has extended its investment in its Windows 2000 servers and workstations as well as legacy applications without compromising the security of its customer data.

The grocery chain is now able to more easily and efficiently maintain a standardized and secure in-store system environment.

"By securing our store systems with Bit9 Parity, we have gained a higher level of security. At the same time, we have extended the life of our existing IT assets and saved millions," said the Vice President & Global Information Security Officer of this food giant.

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Vice President & Global Information Security Officer

