

{ CASE STUDY }

**PARTNER:**

Computer Associates Inc.

RESELLER:

Stirling Systems Group

SAFLINK SOLUTION:

SAFaccess

PARTNER PRODUCT:

eTrust Single Sign-on™

BIOMETRIC TECHNOLOGY:

Fingerprint, LifeView® scanner
with Authentec sensor

Biometric security solves password management problems for LA FIREMAN'S CREDIT UNION

INTRODUCTION

New federal regulations, such as the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, are holding financial institutions liable for strengthening security systems to protect customer data. These stricter security requirements are actually making it easier to improve internal network services, since one of the biggest headaches within IT departments is managing the multiple passwords necessary to restrict access to different databases.

IT managers are under increased pressure to find cost-effective solutions to secure network resources, especially in the financial sector. Stronger security is especially needed within the financial services industry, where any security breach can lead to serious monetary damage and, at the very least, a loss of customer confidence.

Biometric technology is proving to be an effective solution for the financial services industry because it strengthens a network's security while easing administrative concerns. In fact, consulting firm William Rogers & Associates says biometrics will be deployed at the majority of credit unions within the next three to five years.

PASSWORD AND PIN PROLIFERATION

Founded in 1935, the Los Angeles Firemen's Credit Union (LAFUCU) counts over 18,000 area fire fighters and their families as members and is currently expanding to offer services in Burbank and Glendale, California. Like most credit unions, LAFUCU offers a variety of financial products including personal banking, insurance and loans.

LAFUCU's 85 employees need to access multiple protected databases on a daily basis. This not only presented network problems to LAFUCU's IT department, but it also meant employees had to manage as many as ten passwords to carry out their daily duties. If employees were allowed to use the same password for all databases, it would be easier for hackers to access protected information. However, memorizing and managing ten passwords was very difficult, and many employees regularly lost or forgot their passwords – requiring a help desk call. With recent estimates stating that companies spend as much as \$300 per password per user per year in administrative fees, it's easy to see that there is an immediate ROI for biometrics.

THE SOLUTION

SAFLINK's biometric security solution now manages access to LAFUCU's network, while eliminating countless employee passwords. Because biometric security relies on an individual's unique physical characteristic, in this case a fingerprint, employees can quickly and easily log on to the network with one simple scan, without ever needing to remember a password. Since fingerprints are unique and extremely difficult to replicate, this solution strengthens the network's security system by ensuring that only approved personnel can access applications and customers' financial data.

The winning combination included SAFLINK Corporation's SAFaccess™ biometric software, ca smart certified for integration with Computer Associates' (CA's) eTrust™ Single Sign-On security software and compatibility with more than 15 different fingerprint devices. For hardware, LAFCU selected LifeView's FingerID fingerprint scanner. It attaches to a PC workstation through a USB (Universal Serial Bus) interface and utilizes silicon-based TruePrint™ finger image capture technology from AuthenTec, Inc.

Value-added reseller and integrator Stirling Systems Group worked closely with SAFLINK to implement the SAFaccess™ biometric software with finger scanning devices and CA's eTrust Single Sign-On software, configuring each workstation in LAFCU's Windows® NT domain for biometric access. Stirling also assisted in updating the biometric configuration to support LAFCU's upgrade to Windows® Active Directory and deployed scanning devices at each workstation. LAFCU employees were enrolled by scanning their fingerprints, which SAFLINK software automatically associates with each user's profile. Once enrolled, an employee can simply touch the fingerprint scanner to log on.

ASSESSING THE VALUE TO LAFCU

The IT department at LAFCU has benefited significantly from the new system. With a biometrics-based security system in place, they have dramatically increased their level of security without inconveniencing users. By eliminating passwords and speeding up the sign-on procedure, LAFCU will save tens of thousands of dollars in administrative costs and increased end-user productivity. In addition, the IT department's work is no longer interrupted by repeated requests for password and PIN information – approximately 50% of help desk calls.

"The value of LAFCU's biometric authentication system extends beyond the increase in our network security," said George Kings, vice president of information services. "In addition to having the peace of mind that the proprietary information accessible on our network is more secure, we have a bonus – convenient access that alleviates work and frustration for our staff."

Employee reaction to the new security system has been favorable. As with most new technology, 'early adopters' took to the system immediately; others took a few days to become more comfortable with the fingerprint scanners. There were very few implementation problems. In one or two instances, the scanners were unable to read some fingerprints because the employee's skin was too dry. The problem was easily eliminated by using moisturizing lotion or wetting the finger used for recognition. Over the last six months, the system has correctly identified all employees and has never allowed unauthorized access to the LAFCU network.

Looking to the future, SAFLINK's flexible biometric solution offers LAFCU a framework for expanding their biometric infrastructure to include Credit Union customers and additional technology such as e-signatures. Because the system is based on industry standards and an open architecture, it can also adapt to future advances in hardware and software.

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