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The University of Texas at Austin

The University of Texas at Austin Boosts Efficiency and Security with SafeNet HSMs

The Information Security Office at the University of Texas at Austin needed a robust hardware security module (HSM) that met stringent security demands and application requirements—and SafeNet Luna SP platforms were up to the task.

The Organization

The University of Texas at Austin is a public, research-intensive institution with over 48,000 students. The flagship institution of the University of Texas system, this comprehensive university pursues a broad mission of undergraduate and graduate education, research, and service to society.

The Business Need

The University of Texas at Austin's IT team was large, with more than 450 staff members distributed across a range of departments and facilities. In serving their user communities of staff, educators, and students, IT staff members were wrestling with the demands of storing and sharing sensitive digital assets, such as encryption keys, passwords, passphrases, and personal identification numbers.

Previously, the various teams lacked an easy way to store and share these sensitive assets, which presented numerous challenges. For example, it became difficult to collaborate and stay on top of the various permissions as personnel responsibilities and staff changed. They were also vulnerable to the fact that if, for example, a professor had an encrypted laptop and lost the keys, there would not be any way to retrieve the assets. Further, this lack of centralized key storage also presented potential legal exposure. State law requires that encrypted assets be restorable, even in the event of the passing of the owner of those assets.

To meet these demands, the University of Texas at Austin Information Security Office set out to create a system that came to be known as Stache, which could provide secure backup and retrieval of sensitive data.

Challenge
To support the demand for a central repository that would enable secure, efficient sharing of sensitive assets, the security team needed a robust HSM.

Solution
With SafeNet Luna SP platforms, the security team was able to leverage an HSM that delivered maximum security while flexibly supporting the organization's application.

Benefit
With the Luna-powered Stache system, personnel can better protect vital identities and assets, while fostering more efficient collaboration and support.

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The Solution

To ensure Stache provided the highest levels of protection against compromise, the security team sought to leverage a hardware security module (HSM) that offered the most rigorous security features, and that was certified to be compliant with Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS 140-2) and Common Criteria (ISO/IEC15408). However, given the software architecture of Stache, they also needed an HSM that could accommodate code to be run within the protected environment.

To address the organization's security and architecture requirements, the security team chose SafeNet Luna SP HSMs. Luna SP platforms uniquely addressed all the organization's key requirements. These platforms are FIPS and Common Criteria certified, and they enable the security team to run Java code within the HSM's secure environment, which was vital. Today, the university has a total of six Luna SP platforms deployed, three running in a high-availability architecture in production, and three that are used for testing.

The Benefits

With Luna SP and the Stache platform, the IT organization at the University of Texas at Austin was able to realize several key benefits. They can much more efficiently, securely, and effectively share sensitive digital assets across the large institution. Increasingly, across the board, users are consolidating their credentials on the Stache platform, which will serve the organization well, particularly operationally, by helping them mitigate the risk of lost productivity or data due to the loss of credentials. Further, this centralization will help the organization consistently stay in compliance with State laws concerning the recoverability of encrypted assets.

The Luna SP platform has effectively supported the evolution of the Stache system, after which today supports second factor capabilities using public key infrastructure (PKI), short message service (SMS) and email communications. In addition, the organization is in the process of rolling out new capabilities for group permissions management, which will make it more efficient to manage granular permissions across large and diverse sets of users. Given the success of the Stache platform, other campuses within the University of Texas system and across the country are seeking to leverage the solution.

"Luna SP platforms were the only HSMs available that could accommodate our security requirements while, at the same time, supporting the application architecture we'd envisioned. With the Luna platform, we were able to enjoy the full potential we were looking to realize from the Stache platform."

Cam Beasley, Chief Information Security Officer, University of Texas at Austin

About SafeNet

Founded in 1983, SafeNet, Inc. is one of the largest information security companies in the world, and is trusted to protect the most sensitive data for market-leading organizations around the globe. SafeNet's data-centric approach focuses on the protection of high-value information throughout its lifecycle, from the data center to the cloud. More than 25,000 customers across commercial enterprises and government agencies trust SafeNet to protect and control access to sensitive data, manage risk, ensure compliance, and secure virtual and cloud environments.

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