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Iowa Workforce Development Uses Rubrik Sensitive Data Discovery and Ransomware Investigation to Mitigate Data Risk during Covid-19 Pandemic

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

INDUSTRY

State Government

RESULTS

- Automated data classification of federal tax information (FTI) to simplify IRS audits
- Instant visibility into high risks that scales with explosive sensitive data growth
- Immediate time to value without requiring additional infrastructure or learning curve

THE CHALLENGE

- High growth in sensitive data due to 500% increase in unemployment claims and 150 new temporary workers onboarded in six months to meet COVID-19 demands
- Legacy solutions were too costly and complex to manage and install
- Rise in ransomware attacks required a solution for fast ransomware recovery

Iowa Workforce Development is a state agency committed to providing employment services for individual job seekers through our IowaWORKS partnership. Headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa, its staff consists of administrative, labor services, workers' compensation, labor market information, and the unemployment insurance services. The agency also maintains a statewide delivery system of 15 regional, 4 satellite, and 8 expansion offices to provide services to Iowans in communities demonstrating need.

Mike Spurgin, Infrastructure Bureau Chief at the agency, is responsible for the majority of IT operations covering help desk and end user services. "During the COVID-19 pandemic, our agency has been hit heavily with large volumes of unemployment claims. That means we are experiencing a massive rise in sensitive personal and financial information on our systems since the pandemic started," said Spurgin. "From March to October, we have seen approximately a 500% increase in the number of unemployment claims we receive a day and hired over 150 temporary workers and onboarded various third party agencies quickly to meet that demand. We implemented Sensitive Data Discovery to ensure that we have immediate visibility into all new user data created during the pandemic and beyond."

PROACTIVELY SECURING AND MANAGING FEDERAL TAX INFORMATION WITH SENSITIVE DATA DISCOVERY

Despite the critical need for a data governance solution, Spurgin and team struggled to find a solution that met their agencies' needs in a cost-effective manner. Given their small team, they prioritized intuitive, efficient products. "During our security review, we identified data classification as one of our gaps. However, when we previously looked at solutions in the market, they were extremely expensive and required bulky, monolithic architectures. They were too complex to just get up and running, let alone manage," explained Spurgin.

As a Rubrik customer, they saw immediate time to value with Sensitive Data Discovery. "We turned it on and were reporting on sensitive data the next day. We immediately identified that individuals were storing high amounts of personally identifiable information (PII) on shared user folders. As a result, we created policies and processes with our legal team to ensure secure management moving forward," said Spurgin.

Iowa Workforce Development is subject to numerous audits from organizations, such as the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), State of Iowa, and Department of Labor. Thus, it is extremely critical that FTI data is stored only in authorized locations. Spurgin said, "Audits put us through the ringer. The top two questions for IRS audits are where

our FTI data is located and who has access. Completing the questions can take months. We wanted a proactive solution to immediately classify our FTI data and confirm there is no data leakage outside our data bunker."

LEVERAGING RANSOMWARE INVESTIGATION FOR FAST AND RELIABLE RANSOMWARE RECOVERY

In COVID-19 pandemic, state governments and agencies are experiencing a high growth in ransomware attacks, making a robust ransomware defense even more critical. Iowa Workforce Development leverages Rubrik's built-in immutability to ensure their backups cannot be encrypted and Ransomware Investigation to ensure quick, reliable recovery in the event of a ransomware attack.

"We use Ransomware Investigation to fill in the gaps we had in our ransomware defense. We already had strong security measures to ensure ransomware protection. However, if ransomware breaks through our defenses, we now have one-click recovery to minimize the business impact. With Ransomware Investigation, we now have a playbook for fast ransomware recovery," said Spurgin.

Additional benefits include:

- **No learning curve**: "The management experience is very easy. As a Rubrik customer, I love that it provides a seamless experience with the backup software already in place. When needed, it is easy to drill-down to an individual file."
- **No install or additional architecture required**: "Ransomware Investigation and Sensitive Data Discovery truly maximize our existing Rubrik investment and allow us to drive greater value from backup data."
- **No production impact**: "Since it leverages our backup data, it doesn't tax our primary environment."

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