

Credit Immobilier de France Minimizing Risk through Challenges of Centralized Endpoint Control

Crédit Immobilier de France (CIF) is a French group of companies headquartered at Rue de Madrid in the 8th arrondissement of Paris. The company has a strong regional base operating 18 regional subsidiaries with over 2400 employees in 270 locations, as well as a large network of partners and consultants. In 2005, the company advanced property purchase loans totaling over 5.4 billion euros, placing it in the top tier of specialist lenders.

Crédit Immobilier de France is the only independent company specializing in financing property purchase loans for retail customers. It offers an extensive and flexible range of property loan products, together with numerous options that it combines to satisfy the diverse and growing demands of its borrowers. Personalized advice is at the heart of its customer relationship strategy. Having its origins in the HLM (housing for low income families) movement, Crédit Immobilier de France has always been recognized for its expertise in providing facilities for low income families to purchase property. Crédit Immobilier de France's ambition is to develop a network that can respond to increasingly diverse needs by structuring a product range based on property financing, allied to services which it will obtain when necessary by bringing in complementary expertise from specialist partners.

The Challenge

CIF was faced with the task of reorganizing its computer system infrastructure, migrating from a regional system to a centralized group IT infrastructure. The reorganization involved a number of problems, mainly owing to the wide diversity of computer systems and lack of standards at the local level. Management recognized that it was important to implement forward-looking security measures at a global level. Monitoring of the heart of the system infrastructure had already been established, but control over workstations was a missing element.

In this context, Eric Doyen, CIF's Information Systems Security Manager, was well aware of the growing risks associated with workstations. An initial review of the situation had highlighted the global nature of a new phenomenon: the appearance of new media and

the workstation environment, with no control over these elements.

Doyen had overall responsibility across the company for management of information systems. There are two aspects to his role; firstly ensuring compliance with standards set mainly by the company's internal control function and secondly, monitoring of operational risk. This was all done with partial or manual tools.

CIF was aware of the growing internal risk and within the framework of a project to standardize and centralize its computer systems, decided to implement a system for the supervision of workstation security. This would provide a uniform process for the management of workstations and ensure compliance with security policies.



The process needed to meet this challenge had to be clear. Firstly, identify the workstation's essential components, in terms of external peripherals. Secondly, verify the integrity and full compliance of these workstations, standardize the systems, control them and then adapt internal security policies on a regular and global basis.

Selection of the Solution

In CIF's view, managing the security of endpoints in a standardized manner would require the implementation of a centralized management system. The system needed to be independent of the client workstations, so that it could be relied upon totally. After a brief review of solutions currently available in the market, Doyen identified a wide range of targeted tools. However, most of these tools were targeted at an IT customer with an

over-engineered view and did not provide a global view of the workstation.

The solution was Promisec Spectator. "This tool provides a security manager with rapid and dynamic facilities for a perfect view of the pool of workstations. This feature enables the manager to carry out regular compliance audits on workstations," said Doyen. The Promisec solution detects changes and non-compliance with security policies. It is not an inventory control product, it actually controls security.

"The Promisec solution's intuitive nature and ease of use has confirmed that we were right to select this product. Countless products stay on the shelf today, unused, because their implementation and deployment is very complicated. In fact, one of the key points in CIF's decision to select Spectator was the wide range of applications it covers in relation to threats. You would need to combine five or six different products to obtain the results that Spectator achieves in a single solution", Eric Doyen comments.

"Using this product, you can specify whether an individual component should exist or not. The Spectator solution allows you to set a security policy and determine whether the network and workstations comply with that policy. The solution takes a proactive view, with its monitoring and control, which is of course its primary function. However, I also wanted to use it in an open mode, to refine and adapt my security policies to real-life activities on the workstations. We chose the Promisec solution primarily for its technical performance, but also because it is an agentless solution. The agentless aspect was the decisive factor, as it guarantees total independence and provides results on which we can totally rely," added Doyen.

The pilot was carried out on a sample of 200 workstations. The tests carried out were quite rigorous and particularly demanding in respect of system performance. As the solution consumes minimum resources, there was no impact at all on network traffic. Moreover, workstation performance was not impacted at all since agents are not implemented on the workstations. The solution was tested by three separate teams, all of which quickly recognized that the solution lived up to its promises. Because of its ease of use, implementation training only required a half day training session.

The Promisec solution is currently managed centrally from the company's Toulouse site, one of CIF's two IT

Management sites. This department controls security of several hundred workstations throughout France, including workstations at the company's Paris headquarters. CIF's long term aim is to use Promisec for security management of the 2500 workstations in all of its regional branches.



Benefits

Eric Doyen says, "Spectator reduces some of our IT support costs, as it enables us to identify the root problems in our hardware equipment pool. Analysis of our latest statistics confirms that 50% of support activity originates from client workstation-related incidents and at our stage, this is a real and critical threat we need to combat. In parallel we are working on establishing an intelligent and appropriate security policy, at the heart of our newly centralized organization. For example, we are measuring the growth in new external media for which we have not yet established a security policy. In this and other areas, Spectator will enable us to define appropriate rules that we can then use to control and ensure compliance."

The Promisec solution is a perfect fit for the strategy that CIF defined. That is, firstly to carry out internal audits and implement scoring systems that, further down the line, will enable them to adapt and refine their security policies. The solution will then provide for continual verification of violations and

Key points in CIF's product choice:

- The agentless aspect of the solution which provides trustworthy results and reduces implementation problems.
- The solution's wide application coverage: The "multi-threat" aspect (traceability of applications, processes, hardware, services, unauthorized security configuration changes, etc.).
- Ease of use.
- The ability to carry out continual audits and receive real-time snapshots of endpoint activity. This enables detection of security policy violations, evaluation of the level of compliance with policies and identification of potential weaknesses in the security architecture.

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About Promisec®

By providing unique agentless solutions that deliver unprecedented visibility, Promisec guarantees 100% accuracy for the IT business deliverables of service management, compliance, and power management. Using patented agentless technology, Promisec does more than monitor and manage endpoints. Promisec proactively analyzes and fixes IT endpoint issues, particularly those associated with Microsoft infrastructure. Promisec resolves endpoint problems with fast, right-click or self-healing remediation in a matter of minutes with minimal, if any impact on the network or endpoints.

Promisec optimizes IT operational efficiency by lowering cost and increasing accountability. By proactively overseeing everything installed and not installed on the endpoints, Promisec empowers a higher level of accountability by enabling existing IT management and security solutions to actually work as promised. Promisec is a privately held company with headquarters in Israel and offices in New York, India, and Paris. Our customers include Forbes Global 2000 companies and other organizations in the manufacturing and service industries as well as government and health care institutions.