

Higher Education Institution Sets the Standard for Payment Card Industry Compliance

industry:

Government and Education

country:

Americas

business challenge:

Achieve compliance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS)

solution:

A comprehensive risk treatment plan

services:

- Security Architecture and Compliance Consulting Services

results:

- Risk of falling foul of PCI DSS requirements has been mitigated

Executive Summary

A top tier university in the south east of the United States **required assistance in transitioning to a state where it could achieve compliance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS)**. A risk treatment plan, conceptualised and implemented by **Dimension Data has enabled the university to make its compliance objectives a reality**.

Client Overview

Our client claims the distinction of being the nation's premier collegiate university. It offers the personal attention of a small liberal arts college, coupled with the breadth and depth of a large research institution. This duality extends to its faculty ideal of professors who are both teachers and scholars, resulting in meaningful research opportunities for students and classroom experiences with professors who are relevant in their fields. With fewer than 12 students per professor, students benefit from engagement with outstanding teachers every day, inside and outside the classroom.

Business Challenge

Our client was beleaguered by a number of persistent regulatory and compliance challenges. Due to the nature of its operations it's required to comply with PCI legislation.

PCI legislation applies to organisations that store or process credit card data and is focused on ensuring the protection of that data and the application of adequate levels of encryption.

With its official audit looming, the organisation was concerned to learn that a pre-audit assessment has identified several areas of weakness and risk. The university realised it needed to take swift and decisive action or risk losing its PCI compliance status.

The Way Forward

A number of well-executed projects in wireless security and access control on Dimension Data's part prompted the university to invite us to assist it in plugging the gaps within its security environment.

Solution Delivered

Dimension Data recommended that the university undertake a thorough assessment of its IT estate, with a specific focus on the security architecture and compliance issues.

Services Provided

The university has a complex network that made the project convoluted. The exercise entailed evaluating the university's existing network architecture and security controls and working closely with the university's network and security teams, as well as an external PCI Qualified Security Assessor to develop the most appropriate solutions.

The project required that Dimension Data present a detailed analysis of three proposed solution alternatives, explaining the pros, cons and implications of each with respect to PCI compliance, direct technology and implementation cost, ongoing management/service and licensing costs, as well as management overhead.

One of the solutions was highly network-centric, a second was security focused, while the third placed particular emphasis on the data centre environment.

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Value Derived

The presentation equipped the university’s networking and security teams with the relevant insights required to present a compelling case to management. Thereafter, the proposed solution was put before a risk committee for a final decision.

This engagement enabled the university to harness the thought leadership of Dimension Data for business benefit and to resolve a burning issue. What’s more, our end-to-end knowledge of, and ability to speak authoritatively across, multiple technology domains – in this case, the network, data centre and security – provided the university with a number of options and approaches to achieving their compliance objectives.

The success of the project prompted the client to invite Dimension Data to undertake a number of firewall assurance services and technology, security event and information management, firewall and intrusion prevention system technology, security assessments and switch and router upgrades.