FoxGuard Solutions®

CASE STUDY

LARGE MID-WESTERN UTILITY

FoxGuard Solutions brought over ten years of patch management experience to the table to create a custom solution to meet the utility's requirements.

"FoxGuard has provided a reliable, secure solution for our patch management needs."

-Utility Representative

THE PARTNERSHIP BEGINS

A large mid-western energy utility approached FoxGuard Solutions to help address their ongoing, mounting burden with patch management. The manual effort to monitor hundreds of software and hardware packages every month is time-consuming for critical, technical staff who could be performing other mission-critical tasks. This case study outlines some of the key issues and criteria, then provides FoxGuard's solutions to support the customer.

THE CHALLENGE

A large utility located in the mid-West contacted FoxGuard Solutions in mid-2015. They were overwhelmed with their burden of supporting patch discovery for nearly 50,000 assets for their 32,700 megawatts of capacity across multiple business units and 50+ generation plants. This utility needed a more efficient and consolidated approach to monthly patch discovery as required by NERC CIP and a solution to integrate patch discovery results into their asset management system.
The solution needed to be delivered at least every 35 days, based on the requirements within NERC CIP-007-6 R2.2, R2.3, and R2.4. This utility needed a streamlined way to manage thousands of assets every 35 days and eliminate duplicate work among business units and stakeholders with the same assets. Managing nearly 50,000 assets was no easy feat, and they sought creative solutions to this big problem.

THE SOLUTION

FoxGuard Solutions brought over ten years of patch management experience to the table to create a custom solution to meet the utility's requirements. FoxGuard designed an integration solution that linked the customer's asset list provided via the asset management system to the utility's assets to FoxGuard's master patch repository. The integration created a secure line of communication with FoxGuard.
We worked closely with the chosen asset management system provider to ensure that asset information could be exchanged back and forth with agnostic identifiers to ensure that the correct information was being researched and reported for the customer's assets.
A monthly schedule was established within the 35-day requirement to ensure the solution is audit-worthy. Additionally, End of Support (EOS) documentation was provided in an industry-accepted format to ensure audit documentation is readily available to the customer on those items. Monthly patch details are provided only for the customer's assets - only for those items that are in scope with the compliance requirements.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

Asset support and subsequent due diligence is a never-ending task. As a result, FoxGuard and the customer worked closely together to monitor new, changing, and disabled assets. This task involves constant analysis and assessment of the supportability of these new items. FoxGuard aims to support as much of the customer's assets as possible. Additionally, we work to ensure that the integration with the asset management system remains seamless. This solution reduces downtime due to working through technicalities between the two companies and ensures dependability and reliability of critical patch information.

"Your file was flawless".
- Asset Management System Provider for Utility