Preparing Educational Institutions for Today and Tomorrow

Automated Risk Management and Compliance for Education

A technology revolution is underway in education, with immense potential benefits for students, teachers, and administrators alike. In what is known as personalized learning, educators are leveraging the power of the Internet to customize curriculum to the needs of individual students. Distance learning is bringing the promise of education anywhere there's an Internet connection. Streamlined operations are reducing costs and enabling institutions to serve greater numbers of students with fewer physical resources.

It's a time of transition, exciting, yet fraught with risk. Education IT is tasked with delivering new services designed to increase collaboration, empower people, and share resources effectively, while also protecting assets and infrastructure. When students log on to a campus network, they assume that the institution's network will be available to them as needed, and that their personal data will be protected. If that is not the case, reputation and trust are damaged, driving down enrollment and engagement. IT must continuously push the boundaries of what is possible while also earning and maintaining the trust of staff and students, whose privacy is critical to the adoption of these new services.

A number of technologies exist to help with these efforts, but jumping to purchase point solutions to solve one problem or another without first understanding the organization's overall objectives or how solutions work together is counter-productive. IT must seek to understand the institution's specific risks and vulnerabilities, and then map a strategy that will dictate and guide the needed initiatives. This is where IT governance, risk management, and compliance—or ITGRC—comes in.

A program and a practice, ITGRC provides a structured methodology for coordinating service delivery across the educational institution and beyond, resulting in greater efficiencies for students and staff alike. ITGRC includes policies and rule sets to govern security; methodologies for identifying and understanding risks; and courses of action to ensure compliance with the various regulatory mandates designed to protect them and their customers. In addition, ITGRC both relies on and produces metrics that measure progress, proving whether the school is in compliance with regulations, and whether they are at or above those standards.

An effective ITGRC program consists of two key areas. The first encompasses people, process, and procedures. Process and procedures must be created and understood by key players in the organization, or the technology becomes fragmented or is misused, resulting in vulnerabilities. Established workflows and appropriate training ensure that people understand their roles and responsibilities and can smoothly manage risks to protect the organization.

The second key area of ITGRC is technology. Once the business understands its objectives and has a framework of people, process, and procedures in place, the IT team can identify the solutions that are needed to secure the educational institutions' IT systems.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE BEST PRACTICES

Risk management and compliance best practices in combination with robust security technology solutions can effectively protect all levels of an organization's infrastructure.

Compliance Automation

An increasing number of regulatory frameworks, including FERPA, Coppa, CIPA, PCI, and HIPAA, as well as various state and local rules and regulations, demand that IT prove it has secured data centers, networks, devices, and cloud services against disruption and data loss. Automating governance, risk, and compliance processes can result in increased revenue, higher customer satisfaction, reduced data loss, and lower compliance costs. Automated risk management and compliance solutions also improve visibility into the organization's current level of risk, enabling IT to prioritize actions and identify efficient, cost-effective remediation efforts.

IT Risk Management and Continuous Monitoring

An ITGRC solution's primary function is to help education IT communicate risk in business-relevant terms. By leveraging a common compliance framework, administrators can produce a risk-based view of their IT infrastructure. A solution capable of receiving robust data metrics is crucial. Analytics that measure risk are particularly important to educational institutions because they offer an effective way to communicate an appreciation of their customers' trust.

Common and powerful IT security tools contain high value data that most companies can only see in a silo. A comprehensive security compliance or ITGRC tool can leverage this critical data to provide a true view of risk for the organization, enabling valuable prioritization and remediation. The following are IT security functions or tools that feed appropriate metrics to the ITGRC solution:

Encryption

Once IT has a policy in place that dictates what should and shouldn't be encrypted, an encryption solution can be chosen. Advanced data and file encryption for desktops, laptops, and removable storage devices protect PCs, laptops, mobile devices, removable drives, servers, file shares, and emails from unauthorized access. A solution with a central management console enables safe, central deployment and manages encryption at all potential endpoints.

Data Loss Prevention

More and more targeted attacks start with approaching individual employees through social networking.[1] Once the organization understands its goals and priorities and has established roles and responsibilities, a data loss prevention solution should be selected. Data loss prevention solutions discover, monitor, protect, and manage confidential data wherever it is stored or used. A unified, web-based management platform enables users to easily manage policies and remediation workflows, review incident snapshots, and measure risk reduction.

Security and Endpoint Management

Security and endpoint management tools protect endpoints from viruses and malware across the entire computing infrastructure, from the end user to the data center, and across all types of client devices, including smartphones, tablets, laptops, desktops, and servers. They also protect physical and virtual environments with antivirus and antimalware scans that identify and thwart cyber-criminals and zero-day threats.

Managed Security Services

A world-class security partner offering managed services can build and sustain a resilient incident management program in the face of increasingly sophisticated attacks and malware variants. Comprehensive management of the security infrastructure can include log management, monitoring, and analysis of the institution's security posture and events. Customer options may include on-premise, hosted service, or off-premise solutions based on preference.

SYMANTEC RISK MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE SOLUTIONS FOR EDUCATION

As the largest IT security software company in the world, Symantec helps education IT maintain secure 24x7 operation of critical IT systems, protecting student and administrative data from loss, malware, or breach without impacting workflows. The solutions use a layered approach to protect the software-defined data center, enabling customers to prioritize security remediation, enable secure data center migration, and continuously assess and monitor the environment to deliver a unified view of security controls and vulnerabilities. Symantec's business critical services also include business solution training and advanced technical support.

More Information

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To speak with a Product Specialist in the U.S.

1 (800) 745 6054

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Symantec World Headquarters

350 Ellis St.
Mountain View, CA 94043 USA
+1 (650) 527 8000
1 (800) 721 3934
www.symantec.com

[1] Reference Symantec ISTR