

Case Study:

DIRECTV



DIRECTV Enables Secure Use of Cloud Services with Skyhigh Networks



BENEFITS

- Able to accelerate cloud adoption while ensuring data security
- Rapidly understand security and risk for thousands of cloud applications
- Better positioned to meet compliance requirements with encryption and data loss prevention
- Reclaiming hours per week previously spent on manual log-file analysis

Cloud services offer a compelling value proposition to businesses of all sizes, enabling them to reduce costs, increase productivity, and scale services up and down at will. However, embracing cloud services with the necessary levels of security, compliance, and governance can be a challenge. In fact, data security continues to be the most significant barrier to cloud adoption. According to a recent PwC report, 62 percent of respondents rated data security as a “serious” or “extremely serious” risk of cloud computing.¹

BENEFITING FROM CLOUD WHILE MITIGATING RISK

The truth is, employees at most organizations are already using hundreds of cloud applications to get their jobs done—whether IT knows it or not. At DIRECTV, an El Segundo, California-based satellite TV service provider with more than 38 million subscribers, understanding which cloud services employees are using, and how they are using them, is a top priority.

“We don’t want to be an organization that says ‘no, our employees can’t use productivity services from the cloud,’” says Frank Palase, Senior Vice President Strategy and Innovation, DIRECTV.

“Our goal is to enable increased productivity through the cloud while also meeting our security and compliance requirements.”

With a comprehensive registry of all cloud services in use and their risks, DIRECTV can approach the cloud from a position of knowledge and strength.

DIRECTV wanted more visibility into what cloud services were being used and to understand usage over time, and needed a way to proactively and efficiently assess the potential risk of each cloud service. With this information, IT and Security teams could engage in a meaningful, data driven discussion with the business users on whether the service should be allowed or alternatives they should consider.

The company also wanted the ability to encrypt sensitive data going into the cloud. “We wanted more control over data security, and an additional layer of protection beyond what the typical cloud service provider can offer,” says Jenai Marinkovic, Chief Security Officer, DIRECTV.

“We’d have to be much more conservative about cloud adoption if we didn’t have access to the information that Skyhigh provides.”

-- Jenai Marinkovic
Chief Security Officer, DIRECTV

“Skyhigh is a great solution for us because it enables us to take advantage of the agility of the cloud while controlling costs and mitigating risk.”

-- Frank Palase

Senior Vice President Strategy and Innovation, DIRECTV

DISCOVERING AND ANALYZING CLOUD USAGE

Initially, the DIRECTV security team attempted to correlate data from firewall logs and intrusion prevention systems with risk-based data, but the effort proved time consuming and tedious. “It took at least a week for our security experts to manually correlate the data and produce a meaningful report,” says Marinkovic.

DIRECTV explained its challenges to Trace3, a California-based IT solutions provider and systems integrator. Trace3 suggested using Skyhigh Discover to identify all cloud services in use across the organization. After a briefing on the exciting technology with public references such as Cisco and Equinix, DIRECTV agreed to a 30-day proof-of-concept demonstration. “We rely on Trace3, our trusted partner, to keep us up to date on new and innovative technologies in the security space,” says Marinkovic.

Within a day, Trace3 was able to provide reports on all instances of Software as a Service (SaaS), Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), and Platform as a Service (PaaS) in use at DIRECTV, including cloud services uncategorized by firewalls. The reports included the number of times services were accessed, as well as upload/download and allow/deny statistics, and a comprehensive risk assessment of each service.

“We found significantly more cloud services in use than we expected with Skyhigh Discover,” says Marinkovic.

Skyhigh classifies each cloud service into one of more than 30 categories and provides detailed risk assessment across more than 50 attributes, compiling an objective Skyhigh CloudTrust™ rating for each service. Skyhigh Analyze provides data analytics that help DIRECTV identify usage patterns to proactively offer new cloud services in use by their employees, consolidate cloud subscriptions to reduce risk and costs, and highlight anomalous activity that might indicate a data leak or security breach.

“We’ll be able to control the proliferation of multiple instances of the same cloud service, and leverage economies of scale to reduce costs,” says Palase. “Skyhigh is a great solution for us because it enables us to take advantage of the agility of the cloud while controlling costs and mitigating risk.”

SECURING INFORMATION IN THE CLOUD

With Skyhigh, DIRECTV can tell who is using a particular service and what the risk is—if any. Skyhigh also enables seamless enforcement of security policies, such as coarse and granular access control (allow/deny a cloud service or block a specific action), or encrypting data or

applying standards-based encryption while maintaining search and sort functionality for end users. With Skyhigh Secure, DIRECTV can now move its Jive Software business collaboration platform into the cloud to reduce costs, while meeting their data security and compliance requirements. Skyhigh also enables secure access from mobile devices without requiring an agent on device and without any friction to the end-user.

The cloud is here to stay, and it offers significant productivity and business benefits; however, enterprises need to make sure that usage of cloud services meets their privacy, security and compliance requirements. With a comprehensive visibility and enablement solution like Skyhigh, DIRECTV can take a different approach to IT and approach the cloud from a position of knowledge and strength.

“We’d have to be much more conservative about cloud adoption if we didn’t have Skyhigh,” says Marinkovic. “Now we can benefit from greater productivity and faster time to market without compromising our security and compliance requirements.”

1. “The Future of IT Outsourcing and Cloud Computing,” PwC.