

PeaceHealth Uses Globalscape Solution to Secure Digitalized Healthcare Records

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Karl Skoog, Development Manager at PeaceHealth



Charged with securing patient data, streamlining file-sharing systems, and complying with HIPAA requirements, PeaceHealth came to Globalscape for a solution.

Introduction

Healthcare organizations store vast amounts of healthcare records. What may come as a surprise to some, healthcare records are more valuable to criminals than credit card numbers or social security numbers alone according to the “Fourth Annual Benchmark Study on Patient Privacy & Data Security” conducted by the Ponemon Institute. Because of this, healthcare organizations must take extra precautions to protect the records.

PeaceHealth Medical Group, a non-profit healthcare organization with nine hospitals located throughout the western United States, was looking for a file sharing solution for their organization. Internal policies paired with a need to abide by standards established by HIPAA and the HITECH Act required PeaceHealth to pay special attention to data security when consolidating and updating internal applications.

The Challenge

Compliance requires balancing visibility and privacy. All files must have a “paper trail,” meaning access to files at rest and their movement must be carefully tracked. At the same time, the contents of these files, records including personal identifiable information and sensitive financial information, must be kept private and only viewed by authorized personnel. To ensure the safety of these information systems, encryption is commonly used to protect data from unauthorized access.

Additionally, the local network storing this information needs to be isolated behind network firewalls so that information is not stored in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Data stored or processed in this area is vulnerable to attack.

PeaceHealth was looking for a solution that would help them achieve—and maintain—compliance while maintaining productivity for end users and IT staff.

All of PeaceHealth's projects have a vetting process in which the exchange of specific patient data needs to be approved by either legal or the security team. And it requires that anyone PeaceHealth exchanges data with use some form of file transfer that's going to either encrypt or protect that data as it's delivered to the external location.

As an added requirement, PeaceHealth needed a solution to consolidate multiple, disparate file transfer systems. Matt Quirk, Senior Interface Systems Analyst at PeaceHealth, explained that there was a list of specific security protocols that were identified and required by the organization before using a file transfer product.

"The protocols we use most often are Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) and we use File Transfer Protocol (FTP) over SSL, with or without PGP encryption. And we do HTTPS as well. We use FTP regularly for limited, internal-only transfers, as we don't go outside of our intranet with the regular FTP." With these requirements set, PeaceHealth sought out a solution provider.

The Solution

Karl Skoog, Development Manager at PeaceHealth who takes care of interface work, web development, data extracts, and secure file transfer within the organization, explained that Globalscape had all the security protocols that PeaceHealth needed. "We had identified protocols that we had requests for previously and made sure that those were met by Globalscape. But making the balance between security and usability was important as well."

To meet the challenges of securing patient data, PeaceHealth enlisted the help of Globalscape software, specifically the Enhanced File Transfer™ (EFT™) platform. Globalscape solutions have a number of out-of-the-box functionalities, providing customers with a "bottom-up" approach to creating solutions that organizations need. With a number of different modules to choose from, organizations can select—and pay for—only as much or as little as they need.

EFT provides a number of modules that are purpose-built to help organizations meet compliance mandates. PeaceHealth selected the Auditing and Reporting Module (ARM), PGP Module, High Security Module (HSM), and the Advanced Workflow Engine to build a secure, compliant file transfer system.

- > The ARM captures all of the transactions passing through the EFT platform and then allows users to query the data and view reports from EFT's administrative console. This process simplifies the task of compiling reports for audits.
- > The HSM controls access to data and monitors for compliance. The FIPS 140-2 validated cryptographic module also helps to secure sensitive data.
- > The PGP Module protects data at rest and in transit with encryption, decryption, and signing of files.
- > The Advanced Workflow Engine automates routine file transfer processes, freeing up administrators in the IT department for other tasks.

Additionally, Globalscape's DMZ Gateway® functions as a proxy network to protect internal processes. "We have a configuration in place where we have a server in the DMZ that communicates and interfaces with the Globalscape server internally," said Skoog. "So there's an extra layer of security that we have in place just with the hardware server configuration."

The Result

By implementing Globalscape solutions, PeaceHealth has been able to merge disparate file transfer methods across PeaceHealth while improving security and compliance procedures. “Any new project that has a file-sharing component of transferring data into or out of the PeaceHealth network utilizes Globalscape,” said Skoog. PeaceHealth also uses Globalscape technology in its reference lab. Because some lab clients may have a smaller EMR system that don’t have HL7 interfaces and are file-based, they expect PeaceHealth to drop files of lab results securely. “We use Globalscape to securely drop those lab results to the external clients,” Skoog said.

About Globalscape

Globalscape enables businesses around the globe to unleash the power of their data. As a leader in secure information exchange and a data integration innovator, Globalscape’s powerful yet intuitive platform, reliable support and dedication to solving even the most complex of data challenges help organizations accelerate their digital business transformation.