

CASE STUDY

FIRST ENERGY

The First Energy logo is a 3D, metallic-looking text "FirstEnergy" set against a dark blue background with a grid pattern. The letters are white with a blue gradient and a shadow effect, giving it a three-dimensional appearance.

FIRST ENERGY POWERS FILE TRANSFER MANAGEMENT

CUSTOMER
FIRST ENERGY CORP.

COVIANT PRODUCT
DIPLOMAT MFT
STANDARD EDITION

KEY REQUIREMENTS

- ❖ Single solution to handle both encryption/decryption and file transfer
- ❖ Ability to handle rising numbers of daily transactions – number of transactions has more than doubled to date
- ❖ Ensure files are transferred on time every time

BENEFITS

- ❖ Tedious and inefficient scripting is eliminated using Diplomat MFT's easy-to-use interface
- ❖ Notification of file transfer or other errors is sent immediately to the appropriate IT team members for action – before a failed transfer becomes a business problem
- ❖ Job failures reduced from 1-2 per day with the manual system to fewer than one a week using Diplomat MFT

"There isn't any other IT file tool that I recommend as highly or as often as I recommend Diplomat MFT."

— Ryan Andrews, Senior IT Security Analyst, First Energy

BACKGROUND

First Energy is an electric utility headquartered near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with over \$3 billion in annual revenues and more than 4,000 employees. It owns and operates facilities with almost 10,000 megawatts of generating capacity and delivers electric service to approximately 6 million customers in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, and Virginia.

THE CHALLENGE

First Energy transfers sensitive files to business partners including banks, health care institutions, and government regulatory agencies and auditors hundreds of times a day. The security of this data – and the business requirement to ensure that the correct files are transferred on time every time – is paramount to First Energy's operations

As the volume of First Energy's file transfers grew along with its expanding business network, the company began seeing higher rates of job failure. Ryan Andrews, senior IT security analyst with the company, decided there had to be a better way.

Andrews described the encryption and transfer of files using First Energy's legacy tools as "a predominantly manual and inefficient process." He had to use two separate tools: one for encryption and one for file transfer.

"When we set up file transfer jobs, we wasted programmer time writing scripts to encrypt the files to be transferred," Andrews said. "When files were transferred, we struggled to identify failed jobs and to re-transmit or otherwise correct the error. And, as the number of transfers grew, things were only getting worse."

Ryan needed to find a more efficient and reliable way to handle the daily load of file encryptions and transfers between First Energy and its partners

THE SOLUTION

The initial search for a better approach turned up solutions that were expensive and complex. "We didn't need all that. We needed a simple but well-designed and effective tool that would encrypt, decrypt, and transfer files, with good email notification and troubleshooting capabilities."

When a colleague in another firm mentioned Diplomat MFT, Andrews downloaded a trial version. "I knew immediately that I'd found the answer," he says. "Diplomat MFT could encrypt, decrypt and transfer files. But more than that, it performed these functions using an intuitive interface with exceptional audit reporting, excellent debugging tools, and extensive notification capabilities. Diplomat MFT meant the end to time-consuming scripting, hit-or-miss notification, and frustrating debugging of failed jobs."

Andrews found that the debugging capabilities of Diplomat MFT were every bit as comprehensive as those in the high-end solutions he had researched. "Diplomat goes way beyond what I expected in an affordable product. The log viewer lets me look at information involving a specific transaction, or by specific errors, or by a search phrase."

New Diplomat MFT features such as secure FTP (SFTP and FTPS) have added to the product's value. "Secure transfer ups the level of security overall. With regular ftp, login data and files are sent as plain text – both could be intercepted and looked at, and that is why we encrypt files. Secure file transfer goes one step farther by protecting the login data, as well." Andrews notes.

As a publicly owned utility, First Energy is highly regulated and scrutinized; audit and compliance reporting is a key requirement for the business. "With Diplomat MFT, we have a full audit trail to show the transmission and receipt of files. And transfer errors, unavoidable in any system, are quickly dealt with – before they become business problems." Andrews has used Diplomat MFT's extensive and easy-to-implement notification functions to create groups of users to be notified by pager, email, or both. "I can include log files with the notification to people who will review the code and find the cause, and for other groups, such as managers, I can provide summary notification."

Andrews found Diplomat MFT easy to install and became productive with it immediately. And as he began using more of its features, such as advanced debug capabilities and comprehensive notification, productivity increased. "I am impressed by everything it does."

As the universe of business partners expands for First Energy, as for most enterprises today, Andrews has found that using Diplomat can enhance First Energy's business relationships. "In fact, most people I talk to about Diplomat MFT are thrilled that they can receive immediate email notification when a file transfer is completed. There isn't any other IT file solution that I recommend as highly or as often as I recommend Diplomat."

"Diplomat MFT enabled us to take two time-consuming and inefficient processes – encrypting and setting up file transfers – and make them one single, automated process that supports First Energy's business requirements."

—Ryan Andrews, Senior IT Security Analyst, First Energy

ABOUT COVARIANT SOFTWARE

Coviant Software delivers secure file transfer management products that secure data in transit and improve compliance with industry and government mandates. Built on open technologies, such as OpenPGP encryption, SFTP, and SQL, Coviant's Diplomat MFT platform is an easy-to-implement, cost-effective solution for automating your secure file transfer process.

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