

Idaptive Securely Enables London Hydro's Move to the Cloud



London Hydro is a Local Distribution Company (LDC) that serves the city of London, Ontario, Canada. The utility delivers electricity to over 152,000 customers across the residential, institutional, commercial and industrial sectors.

THE CHALLENGE

Implement a cloud-based identity management solution as the basis for an entirely new cloud-based infrastructure. Include secure single sign-on (SSO) to support productivity-enhancing mobile apps. Do this in a way that reduces demand on IT.

As with any Local Distribution Company (LDC), the top priority at London Hydro is literally keeping the lights on. LDCs must therefore act with extreme caution when it comes to introducing new technologies into the system that could negatively impact service to customers. But that caution must be balanced with the many benefits new technologies provide, such as the ability to significantly reduce costs, improve delivery systems and minimize waste.

After months of careful evaluation of the advantages and the risks, Mike Flegel, Cyber Security Specialist at London Hydro, was tasked with finding a single sign-on platform that would support the company's move to a cloud-based infrastructure. "The nature of electrical production, transmission and distribution is going through a huge metamorphosis, at the center of which are transformational technologies," he says. "Our goal is to be a leader that demonstrates the way for other energy providers to securely adopt these new technologies."

Historically, security at LDCs has been a matter of simply keeping office and field networks physically separate, and requiring multiple passwords to access individual resources. But times have changed — complete separation can be too restrictive and users juggling multiple passwords can end up being security risks themselves.

London Hydro needed to implement an identity management solution that would be the basis for an entirely new cloud-based infrastructure consisting of everything from traditional ERP datacenter applications like SAP and JDE to new, mobile apps for the field. At the same time, it was important to reduce the IT workload by minimizing password reset requests, and simplifying the process of adding or removing employee access and incorporating new apps into the environment.

THE SOLUTION

After evaluating several vendors featured in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for IDaaS, London Hydro chose Idaptive because it offered the best method for applying consistent access control policies, and included MFA for an even more secure environment.

London Hydro was looking for an identity management solution that provided consistent application of access control policies, and single sign-on to ensure usability and rapid adoption by employees. After evaluating several vendors featured in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for IDaaS, Flegel selected Idaptive because it met all the functionality requirements, including multi-factor authentication (MFA) capabilities for an additional layer of security. To be effective, MFA must be easy for users so that it increases rather than stifles productivity.

"Getting employees out in the field to remember multiple passwords is a huge challenge," Flegel says. "With SSO, they can simply click on an icon to gain access to whatever resources they need. And with MFA, we can selectively add an additional layer of security to protect more sensitive applications. By providing both SSO and MFA, Idaptive solves many of our most challenging issues."

According to Flegel, 80% of the business case made for the Idaptive solution revolved around security. “A few years ago, cybersecurity wasn’t even a topic on the London Hydro Board of Directors’ agenda. Now it’s a primary focus. With Idaptive, we’ve been able to respond to our executives’ concerns — we no longer have to worry about password errors, strength, expiration, or even complaints about having too many of them. All of that makes us so much more secure.”

THE RESULTS

London Hydro has achieved a secure, cloud-based infrastructure. There’s been a reduction in service desk calls due to SSO, and workers are now able to access key mobile apps in the field. The entire infrastructure is being evaluated by other LDCs for replication.

Since its implementation, Idaptive has helped to improve worker productivity. “Not long ago, our field personnel were using pen and paper to write notes telling them where maintenance was required, such as which transformer needed repairs or which lines needed stringing. We’ve now issued everyone rugged laptops and they use mobile apps. This has resulted in efficiencies we hadn’t even anticipated and has saved us both time and money.”

IT has also experienced the benefits of the Idaptive rollout. “We’ve noted a significant reduction in service desk calls, and that has freed up our IT team to focus on rolling out additional apps that further help get the job done faster and more efficiently. Most importantly, Idaptive really enabled us to move our base applications to the cloud. We found the product easy to use, intuitive, and easy to install.”

Flegel and his team knew they would eventually need a mobile device management (MDM) system to complement the new infrastructure, but it wasn’t originally part of business case for an identity management solution. Flegel says, “I hadn’t anticipated doing MDM at the same time, and it wasn’t in the RFP. But after installation, we explored the program and it blew us away. It ticked off every single box that we needed for a mobile device management system. It caught us totally by surprise.”

Flegel stressed, “Our mission was to be a leading LDC adopter in technology, and already our entire infrastructure is being examined and evaluated by other LDCs. They want to leverage our investigation process and to mimic some of the interesting things we’re doing.”

When looking for a solution, Flegel recommends that LDCs “be very specific about their needs in order to find the right solution for their organizations. Idaptive was right for us. The feature set, the ease-of-use and the value made it stand out. We were off and running on day one, and we’ve never looked back.”

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Idaptive helped us to become Ontario’s first electrical utility to adopt a cloud-first infrastructure.

Mike Flegel, Cyber Security Specialist London Hydro

Idaptive delivers Next-Gen Access, protecting organizations from data breaches through a Zero Trust approach. Idaptive secures access to applications and endpoints by verifying every user, validating their devices, and intelligently limiting their access. Idaptive Next-Gen Access is the only industry-recognized solution that uniquely converges single sign-on (SSO), adaptive multi-factor authentication (MFA), enterprise mobility management (EMM) and user behavior analytics (UBA). With Idaptive, organizations experience secure access everywhere, reduced complexity and have newfound confidence to drive new business models and deliver kick-ass customer experiences. Over 2,000 organizations worldwide trust Idaptive to proactively secure their businesses. To learn more visit www.idaptive.com.

Ready to learn more?

Please contact us at
hello@idaptive.com