CASE STUDY

Unique U.S. Resort Heightens Visibility Across All Networks

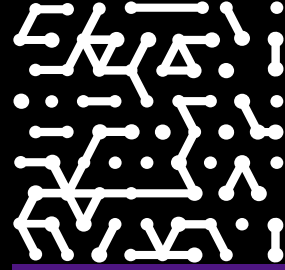Armis enables CISO and IT to get a centralized view of network assets and focus on top priorities

Industry

Resort and convention center

IT environment

Multiple environments (PCI infrastructure, guest network, audio/video facilities) with approximately 5,000 networked assets

Introduction

Kalahari Resort and Conference offers unique vacation and convention experiences to its guests at its four facilities in the U.S. With three highly active networks to manage—corporate, PCI, and guest—the CISO implemented Armis to achieve deeper and broader visibility into network devices, users, and traffic. The successful deployment led to additional use cases that have significantly enhanced operations and saved time by zeroing in on key areas of focus.

Kalahari Resort and Conventions are full-service African-themed vacation and conference destinations in the U.S., with world-class accommodations, state-of-the-art meeting and convention facilities, and America's largest indoor waterparks. Currently, there are four Kalahari Resort locales: Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin; Sandusky, Ohio; Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania; and Round Rock, Texas. In addition, Kalahari Resort properties include a golf course and corporate headquarters.

Tim Everson has served as CISO at Kalahari Resort for three years as part of the leadership team responsible for roughly 30 IT professionals. He's involved at a hands-on level with all things security—design, architecture, implementation, strategy, compliance, and guest issues.

At Kalahari Resort, Everson and his team oversee multiple environments: the corporate infrastructure, the payment card industry (PCI) infrastructure, a large guest network, and audio/video facilities. Everson was prompted to evaluate Armis because he was increasingly concerned about lack of visibility into all these areas. After running a seamless proof of value (PoV) at the Wisconsin Dells facility, Everson was convinced that Armis was exactly what he was looking for.

"Armis stood out from other vendors, mainly because of its ease of use, simplicity, straightforward interfaces, plug-and-play deployment, and its ability to segment, view, sort, and alert. The time to value was immediate, hands down. We were able to get in and get things done on day one," he says. "Armis is great at finding everything in my environment. I'm seeing what I need to see and really appreciate the functions I did not have before."

In addition, Everson and his team are taking full advantage of Armis's extensive integration capabilities, which will enable them to get more value from existing tools. They have already completed integrations with Microsoft Active Directory; vCenter Server, the centralized management utility for VMware; Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP), a protocol for collecting and organizing data about managed devices on networks; and one of the many wireless vendor integrations that Armis provides. In the near future, Everson and his team also plan to utilize other wired and wireless endpoint equipment vendor and endpoint security integrations.

The PCI Environment Takes Center Stage

Among the most mission-critical use cases for Armis at Kalahari Resort is gaining better visibility into the PCI infrastructure, which is where credit cardholder information is obtained and transmitted. To ensure the safety and privacy of cardholder data and to prevent credit card fraud, Kalahari Resort is required to abide by the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI-DSS).

With that in mind, Armis has been instrumental in helping Everson make sure that network segmentation is working properly. Armis also monitors communications between the segments. Finally, it provides comprehensive and accurate visibility into the activity of devices and the people using them, along with assurance that the cardholder data is where it should be.

"Thanks to Armis, we are now able to see into the PCI environment and receive alerts when new devices make attempts to enter it. The ability to clearly view abnormal traffic going through PCI firewalls and subnets has been huge for us," remarks Everson. "When we receive a notification from Armis that there is a device trying to get into the PCI network, we can go back to the firewall and make sure the ports are closed so that the data doesn't reach any endpoints. This use case alone is justification and validation for investing in Armis."

Challenges

- Providing clearer management-level visibility into corporate, PCI, and guest networks

- Gaining deeper insights and handling of problematic traffic

- Increasing vulnerability management capabilities for resort IT staff

- Relieving overburdened security resource

Device Inventory Across All Networks

Kalahari Resort has a large inventory of managed networked assets consisting of nearly 2,200 PCs across the enterprise, along with hundreds of switches, video cameras, and other devices. Armis tracks and categorizes these assets, collecting valuable data such as security status, vulnerabilities, anomalies, and where devices are being used and by whom.

In addition, and equally important, is Armis's ability to discover guest devices. Everson notes that, in any given week, Armis has shown that nearly 140,000 devices—from mobile phones and laptops to wirelessenabled vehicles in resort parking lots—can touch the Kalahari Resort network.

It's not unusual, he points out, to have huge traffic spikes on the guest network. When this occurs, Armis helps Everson and his team immediately identify which guests on the network are causing this. This includes detection of activity caused by BitTorrent, a protocol that enables anyone to download and share multimedia files, such as videos, music, apps, images, and documents. The problem with BitTorrent usage is that it not only slows down the internet connection, it can also potentially introduce malicious files or malware into the network.

"It's amazing how quickly we can see things on our network, like BitTorrent. We're a resort, but we still have to make sure guests on our network aren't doing things like downloading torrents," explains Everson. "With Armis, we can see that kind of activity from guests immediately. Then we can knock them off the network and lock down the access point and not have to worry about it."

Unexpected Use Cases for Armis

In addition to leveraging Armis to gain complete visibility and insights into devices, Kalahari Resort has also found other applications for the solution.

Vulnerability management, for example, has been made easier with Armis, as it pinpoints devices that are using unpatched apps or older operating systems, which can increase overall risk. It also monitors for suspicious or anomalous behavior. "With Armis, we're seeing things that other vulnerability management scanners may not see," observes Everson. "We've been able to see application traffic that was attempting to subvert our firewalls and have been able to curb that."

Armis Results

- Accurate and comprehensive asset inventory across all three networks

- Tighter control over anomalous behavior on the guest network

- Better oversight over bandwidth and network performance

- Improved PCI security and compliance

- Centralized, easily accessible dashboards with granular data for more efficient issue resolution

- Significant time savings through reduction of the security workload
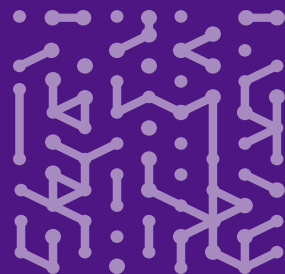
Another use case is monitoring certificates for network security protocols. Armis sees the certificates that pass through the networks and surfaces the ones that have expired. This enables Everson and his team to bring certificates up to date quickly to ensure secure application workflows and transactions for users.

Additionally, Armis has uncovered network authentication failures. This occurs when user accounts with recently changed passwords attempt to log into a site repeatedly without success. This can bog down bandwidth. By identifying these events, Everson can assign an individual on his team to troubleshoot the problem and take corrective action.

The Gift of Time

All these use cases have enabled Everson and his team to enjoy greater operational efficiency and improve their time management.

"One of the challenges we faced was that, while we have 30 or so people on the IT staff today, Kalahari Resort has a small security team. Armis has given us back our time. Now we can share the dashboard and give the IT team the information they need to act on," he relates. "This has been crucial for us in that it has taken so much off our plates and has allowed us to get other important work done."

Armis collects an abundance of data that Everson and his team can filter, view in a dashboard, and share. It saves them from going to 15 different tools to gather information and make sense of it. Armis offers the security team the ability to sort and segment the network so they can drill down, in real time, to see and locate all types of devices and receive alerts when there are red flags.

Everson recommends Armis to other organizations without hesitation: "Armis has been a game-changer for us. It's saved us so much effort, and I'm happy to spread the word."

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Tim Everson
Chief Information
Security Officer
Kalahari Resorts
and Conventions
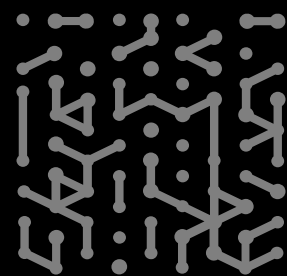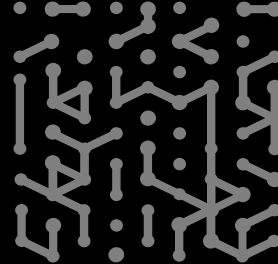
ARMIS.

Armis, the asset intelligence cybersecurity company, protects the entire attack surface and manages the organization's cyber risk exposure in real time.

In a rapidly evolving, perimeter-less world Armis ensures that organizations continuously see, secure, protect and manage all critical assets.

Armis secures Fortune 100, 200 and 500 companies as well as national governments, state and local entities to help keep critical infrastructure, economies and society safe and secure 24/7.

Armis is a privately held company headquartered in California.

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