

# CASE STUDY

## SOUTHERN STATES



### CUSTOMER

SOUTHERN STATES COOPERATIVE, INC.

### COVARIANT PRODUCT

DIPLOMAT MFT

### KEY REQUIREMENTS

- ❖ Replace McAfee® E-business Server for PGP encryption and decryption
- ❖ Minimize risk by replacing only PGP commands in scripts
- ❖ Affordable solution
- ❖ Seamless transition with no impact on internal customer departments

### BENEFITS

- ❖ Quick migration with “go live” in three weeks
- ❖ Improved overall security
- ❖ Fast set-up of new file encryption jobs
- ❖ Reduced file encryption/decryption failures
- ❖ Rapid troubleshooting and problem resolution
- ❖ More time savings with built-in email notifications, audit reporting and automated file archiving

*“Diplomat MFT arrived complete with every feature I’d dreamed of in a file encryption product. I was floored by the functionality.”*

*—Bob Whitty, E-Business Development,  
Southern States Cooperative*

## SOUTHERN STATES COOPERATIVE REPLACES MCAFEE® EBUSINESS SERVER

### BACKGROUND

Since 1923 Southern States Cooperative has provided farming inputs, services, and advice to people who like to grow things. Members/customers include large commercial farmers, medium/small farmers, and home gardeners all in search of reaching desired goals in producing crops, livestock, gardens, and lawns. With more than 200,000 members, Southern States today encompasses 1,200 retail locations in 23 states. Headquartered near Richmond, Virginia, the cooperative purchases, manufactures, or processes feed, seed, fertilizer, farm supplies, and fuel.

### THE CHALLENGE

The news that McAfee® E-Business Server would reach the end of life in July 2014 “dropped like a bomb” during a routine conversation between Bob Whitty and his manager Brent Kemp in the E-Business section of Southern States’ IT department.

Finding a new way to handle PGP encryption for more than 50 transfer jobs had suddenly become a new priority. Whitty and his manager immediately identified their top requirements for a replacement. It would need to provide a command line interface, enable them to keep the other components of the file transfer system intact and be affordable.

What they didn’t realize at the time was how much the right new solution would deliver over and above what they’d identified. As Whitty began to research replacement options online, he “found that some offerings in the market offered way more complexity than we needed. One came with a price that took my breath away. Others did not meet our requirements at all.” One contender, when tested, turned out to have bugs that no one in customer service “ever followed up with me on.”

When Whitty landed on the Coviant Software website, he was impressed by the level of detailed information available about Diplomat MFT. He downloaded the free trial software.

About an hour into the free trial, Whitty received a call from a Coviant representative who offered to answer questions and give him a guided tour. “We talked for nearly an hour and I was impressed by all the features packed into the Diplomat MFT at such an affordable price.”

It soon became clear to Whitty that Coviant Software’s attention to customer service was as impressive as its product. “Since then, I’ve learned that the company’s exceptional customer service continues after the sale – that’s not often been my experience with software companies,” he commented.

## RESOURCES



### [Data Sheet »](#)

Benefits, features and technical specifications.



### [Web »](#)

More information about Diplomat MFT

[Request Demo »](#)



[Free Trial »](#)



[Contact us](#)



Another advantage to Diplomat MFT is its comprehensive email notifications, not only to the Cooperative's IT groups, but also, where needed, to business units.

Should a transaction fail, Diplomat MFT automatically produces a debug email message with the complete job log. "With our old system, I would get 5-6 calls from operations at 2 a.m. almost every month with the name of a failed scheduler job." Whitty would log in remotely and painstakingly review the log file to figure out what happened. He'd have to cut and paste from different files to create an audit trail.

Now he gets calls less than once a month and, when he is called, he can diagnose the problem with the information in a single automated email from Diplomat eBusiness Solution. Whitty estimates overall time on troubleshooting has been reduced by 80%.

The audit reports available with Diplomat MFT are another invaluable factor in making Southern States more efficient in responding to inquiries. All Whitty has to do is select the transactions involved and the date range. Diplomat MFT runs the report for him in a format that he can email to others.

A final benefit – an unexpected one – is the overall improvement in data security thanks to Diplomat MFT. With McAfee® E-Business Server, passphrases for PGP private keys were stored as plain text in batch files and were visible to anyone who logged into the server. With Diplomat MFT, the passphrases are decrypted and read into memory only when needed by a file encryption job.

Whitty sums up the overall impact of the migration this way: "I could never have predicted the impact Diplomat MFT would have on reducing the manpower effort required to resolve issues – or how much sheer frustration it would eliminate for us. In fact, we hardly ever even have issues now. We are definitely getting more than our money's worth."

*"With Diplomat MFT, our overall time on troubleshooting has been reduced by 80 percent. We are definitely getting more than our money's worth."*

*—Bob Whitty, E-Business Development, Southern States Cooperative*

## THE SOLUTION

Diplomat MFT delivered a quick and clean replacement for McAfee® E-Business Server that went live in three weeks. Southern States was able to keep the rest of its file transfer infrastructure intact. The Cooperative continues to use a scheduler on an AS400 to invoke transactions and a command line FTP product. Their existing PGP key rings imported flawlessly.

Only the PGP commands for McAfee® E-Business Server needed to be changed. "For final migration to Diplomat MFT, all our operations staff had to do was make one small change to the command line. That was it," Whitty said. None of the customer departments are even aware the file encryption solution has changed.

As the migration started, Whitty was pleased to discover that the file encryption jobs created during his trial could be imported right into the production system, allowing him to ramp up quickly. So far, about 60 file encryption jobs are set up using Diplomat MFT. This number is expected to rise monthly in response to new requests and new projects.

Southern States continues to discover more of the software's time-saving benefits. For example, Diplomat MFT's ability to create automatic archives eliminates maintenance programming. The software archives everything before and after encryption, puts it into a zip file, allows Whitty or another developer to specify a retention period, and automatically deletes the archive at the correct time. With their former software, every step of this process had to be programmed.

## ABOUT COVARIANT SOFTWARE

Coviant Software has been a trusted provider of OpenPGP encryption, decryption, signing, verification and other OpenPGP features for almost 20 years. Coviant Software delivers Secure Managed File Transfer solutions to improve the productivity of file transfer administrators. Diplomat Managed File Transfer software uses Intelligent File Transfer™ design with embedded secure file transfer logic, so file transfer experts can quickly design and deploy file transfer jobs with fewer errors and failed transfers.

© 2022 Coviant Software LLC. All rights reserved. Coviant and Diplomat MFT are registered trademarks of Coviant Software LLC. All other company and product names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners.



5804 Babcock Rd / Suite 151 / San Antonio, TX 78240 / 210.985.0985 /  
[info@coviantsoftware.com](mailto:info@coviantsoftware.com) / [www.coviantsoftware.com](http://www.coviantsoftware.com)