



Multinational company ensures hybrid Active Directory security

Prysmian Group effectively manages its complex global IT ecosystem thanks to visibility and control from On Demand Audit Hybrid Suite by Quest.



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Alessandro Bottin, Global Infrastructure & Operation Manager, Prysmian Group

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Prysmian Group

Company Prysmian Group
Industry Manufacturing
Country Italy
Employees 30,000
Website <https://www.prysmiangroup.com/en>

BUSINESS NEED

Prysmian Group needed to ensure data security and system availability at its hundreds of locations around the world, but native and bespoke tools were unable to deliver the necessarily visibility and control.

SOLUTION

With On Demand Audit Hybrid Suite by Quest, the IT team can now effectively secure its entire hybrid Active Directory environment. They have insight into and control over changes, configurations, logon activity and more. Plus, delegated access and powerful visualizations make it simple to share actionable intelligence with non-technical stakeholders.

BENEFITS

- Delivers real-time visibility into a complex hybrid IT ecosystem
- Enables coordination of activity among local IT teams, with clear accountability
- Prevents operational disruptions and downtime
- Enables easy sharing of useful information with non-technical stakeholders

SOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

- [Microsoft Platform Management](#)

“Rebuilding an AD object that was improperly modified could take hours, which would definitely impact operations.... The object protection feature of the Quest solution enables us to prevent such issues from arising in the first place.”

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Having offices and plants around the world enables multinational organizations to offer their customers enormous benefits: On the one hand, clients enjoy the economies of scale that come with a global presence; on the other, they get boots-on-the-ground attention and care from the company’s local representatives. However, this organizational model brings steep challenges for IT teams, who need to ensure both data security and system availability at all locations. For Prysmian Group, the world leader in cable manufacturing, there is one place to get the deep insight required to keep its global hybrid IT ecosystem safe and humming: On Demand Audit Hybrid Suite by Quest.

Prysmian Group is a world leader in the energy and telecom cables and systems industry, with almost 140 years of experience. The company was created in 2005 from a spin-off of Pirelli Cavi and then the 2011 merger of cable giants Prysmian and Draka. With sales of over €11 billion, about 29,000 employees in over 50 countries, and 106 plants and 25 R&D centers, the Group is strongly positioned in high-tech markets and offers the widest possible range of products, services, technologies and know-how. It operates in the businesses of underground and submarine cables and systems for power transmission and distribution, of special cables for applications in many different industries and of medium and low voltage cables for the construction and infrastructure sectors. For the telecommunications industry, the Group manufactures cables and accessories for voice, video and data transmission, offering a comprehensive range of optical fibres, optical and copper cables, and connectivity systems. Prysmian is a public company, listed on the Italian Stock Exchange in the FTSE MIB index.

at 291 facilities across North America, Europe and Latin America. As a result, the purchase not only expanded Prysmian Group’s product portfolio, but also instantly increased its workforce by 50 percent and extended its global footprint.

Naturally, the IT integration involved in the acquisition was a massive and complex undertaking. The IT team had recently spent four years completing the consolidation project associated with the acquisition of Draka, which had just 4,000 employees, so they clearly understood the size of the challenge they were facing. Instead of struggling with native tools and manual processes again, they looked for a third-party product to streamline the migration project and quickly discovered Migration Manager for Active Directory by Quest. With the help of this proven solution, the IT team was able to consolidate General Cable’s AD environment into Prysmian Group’s ecosystem in just two years — half as long as the earlier integration, even though more than twice as many user accounts were involved.

A LARGE ACQUISITION HIGHLIGHTS THE LIMITATION OF NATIVE AUDITING TOOLS

A few years after the merger that created Prysmian Group, the company underwent another transformative event: its 2018 acquisition of General Cable. One of the largest wire and cable manufacturing companies in the world, General Cable had some 10,000 employees

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

SOFTWARE

Change Auditor
for Active Directory

Change Auditor
for Logon Activity

On Demand Audit

The IT integration project did more than deliver a unified hybrid Active Directory for the company. It also shone a spotlight on the auditing and troubleshooting gaps left by native tools, even when supplemented with some bespoke solutions that Prysmian Group's IT team had created to help with log collection and other tasks.

"We have locations all around the world, including manufacturing plants where operations simply cannot be disrupted," explains Alessandro Bottin, global infrastructure & operation manager at Prysmian Group. "Often, the IT teams in, say, Italy, the U.S. and Australia need to work on the same task in parallel, and everything has to be done overnight or in a weekend because the production line has to be started again Monday morning. The native tools are not bad, but they are missing a lot of the advanced functionality we need. For example, it was very difficult to get a complete understanding of access rights and know exactly who had done what. During the migration project, it became very clear that we needed a comprehensive auditing and governance solution."

OVERCOMING THE GAPS WITH ON DEMAND AUDIT HYBRID SUITE

The success of the migration project illustrated the quality of both Quest solutions and Quest support. Therefore, Prysmian Group was eager to learn about the vendor's solution for effective auditing and governance of hybrid Active Directory environments: On Demand Audit Hybrid Suite.

The suite joins three Quest solutions to deliver a single view of activity across the hybrid environment from a modern, intuitive SaaS dashboard. On Demand Audit is an Azure-hosted SaaS that tracks all activity across Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, OneDrive for Business, Teams and Azure AD, including sign-ins. As part of the hybrid suite, it also collects data from Change Auditor for Active Directory and Change Auditor for Logon Activity, such as details about all critical configuration, user and administrator changes across the on-premises AD environment, and all AD logon/logoff activity.

All that data is consolidated, correlated and normalized, providing Prysmian Group with a unified view of its entire hybrid environment. One-click access to detailed information on each event, flexible search and interactive data visualizations slash investigation time and simplify analysis. Real-time alerts enable immediate action, and granular delegated access ensures each stakeholder can get exactly the reports they need.

DELIVERING STRONG GOVERNANCE THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE AUDITING AND VISIBILITY

With On Demand Audit Hybrid Suite in place, the IT team at Prysmian Group now has the power to ensure proper governance across its complex hybrid IT ecosystem. Since every change is tracked and can be easily reported and alerted on, it's easy to know exactly who did what and coordinate activity across geographically dispersed teams. As a result, IT can deliver on tight timelines while meeting the needs of individual business units and ensuring uptime of the manufacturing plants and R&D centers.

For example, the team can now ensure that Group Policy is properly applied to new organizational units (OUs) created as part of a merger or acquisition, as well as ensure consistent computer configurations across all locations. "I am proud to say that we have the same user PC configuration everywhere, whether the machine is in Australia, Germany, Latin America, North America or anywhere else," Bottin adds. "That is not only because we have a good policy in Active Directory, but because On Demand Audit Hybrid Suite enables us to secure it properly."

PREVENTING ISSUES WITH OBJECT PROTECTION

The Change Auditor portion of the suite enables Prysmian Group to go an essential step further and avoid security, productivity and compliance issues by preventing changes to critical Active Directory objects. "There are certain Active Directory objects that are fundamental for our environment, and any change to them could disrupt the business," Bottin notes. "Rebuilding an AD object that was improperly modified could

With On Demand Audit Hybrid Suite, Prysmian Group can view activity across its hybrid IT ecosystem from an intuitive SaaS dashboard.

take hours, which would definitely impact operations because, as a global organization, we have plants active no matter the time of day. Internal policy requires us to be able to restore core applications within four hours, but the object protection feature of the Quest solution enables us to prevent such issues from arising in the first place.”

EMPOWERING SAFE DELEGATION

Throughout the two acquisitions, Prysmian Group made it a priority not to simply integrate the technical environments but also to take care of the people involved. In particular, the company understands that the differing missions of its various business units require local teams who are empowered to review activity and act, and not all sites have IT pros on location. With On Demand Audit, Bottin can give any stakeholder, such as a manager or even an external auditor or partner, the ability to see exactly the reports they need and nothing more. It takes just a few clicks; there’s no need to make any configuration changes or set up any additional infrastructure.

Moreover, On Demand Audit makes the data easy to understand by providing compelling and interactive visual dashboards. “PowerShell and similar Microsoft tools provide valuable data, but only for technicians,” says Bottin. “The powerful visualizations in On Demand Audit enable us to share actionable information with anyone who needs it. This is tremendously valuable and supports their desire to take on additional responsibilities.”

FACILITATING REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

On Demand Audit Hybrid Suite also facilitates compliance with mandates like the GDPR. Unlike native tools, it stores

all audit data for up to 10 years at a fixed subscription price, so Prysmian Group can keep as much audit data as needed to satisfy compliance requirements, without increasing the company’s Azure storage costs. In addition, it includes out-of-the-box compliance reports that help IT teams satisfy auditors with less effort.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Bottin readily admits that Prysmian Group is not yet taking advantage of the full capabilities of On Demand Audit Hybrid Suite. In particular, in the cloud, the IT team is currently using the Quest solution to monitor only Azure AD. However, as adoption of applications like Microsoft Teams and SharePoint Online increases at the company, Prysmian Group plans to expand its utilization of the tool. Indeed, Bottin believes that good governance will only become more critical as time goes on. “I’m convinced that Active Directory will soon be only in the cloud, which will make it more difficult to maintain control over changes and activity,” he says. “With On Demand Audit Hybrid Suite, we are well-positioned to be able to understand and evaluate what’s happening across our IT ecosystem and make wise decisions.”

ABOUT QUEST SOFTWARE

Quest Software creates technology and solutions that build the foundation for enterprise AI. Focused on data management and governance, cybersecurity and platform modernization, Quest helps organizations address their most pressing challenges and make the promise of AI a reality. Around the globe, more than 45,000 companies including over 90% of the Fortune 500 count on Quest Software. For more information, visit www.quest.com or follow Quest Software on X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn.

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