

DIGIPASS enables secure online access to Penn State's administration services

As a major internet user, the Pennsylvania State University is keenly aware of the need for Internet Security. Penn State implemented a number of security measures such as encryption, fire walling and password authorization to protect students' personal information. Strong authentication allowed Penn State to transfer their paper-based business processes into online electronic procedures. By deploying VASCO's DIGIPASS® authentication devices to faculty and staff, the University was able to provide direct electronic and secure access to its administration services.



Penn State is a leading research university in the United States and is recognized around the world for its excellence in engineering, the sciences, agriculture, and high-tech innovations. It is a comprehensive institution that includes colleges of the arts and liberal arts, as well as colleges and schools of health and human development, communications, business, and education. More than 80,000 students are currently enrolled in a wide variety of academic programs.

TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION INCREASES SECURITY

Traditional password based security is being replaced as static passwords, such as the name of a favorite pet, are relatively easy to crack and do not offer any protection against fast growing forms of online fraud like phishing, keyloggers and Trojans. A two-factor authentication solution based on something only the user has (e.g. a physical authentication device) and something only the user knows (e.g. a security code or password) provides a far higher level of security.

Penn State has been using two-factor authentication for years, providing real-time online access to academic and financial records in the University's administrative database. Authorized faculty and staff can manage records for all Penn State students from admission through graduation, including online grade management, billing information, course scheduling and student aid. To

maintain the data integrity and confidentiality of those records, the University mandates the use of two-factor authentication to access its centralized administrative systems.

"Authentication by user ID and dynamic passwords generated by a personal device, provides greater security", says John Williams, Director of User Services at Penn State. "Exposure to our administrative systems through password misuse can be severely reduced."

DIGIPASS OFFERS A HIGH RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Although a device based authentication solution was already in place, Penn State ended its dependence on higher-priced hardware authenticators in favor of VASCO's DIGIPASS technology. "We were looking for a more budget-friendly yet proven security solution to authenticate users with different roles to varying applications," said John Williams, Director of User Services at Penn State. "Since we already implemented a third party authentication package, the new-found authentication solution needed to be fully compliant with our mainframe infrastructure at no additional cost. We decided to organize an open bid and choose the best solution in terms of quality and cost-effectiveness. VASCO came out on top."

Security solutions provider ISM played a facilitating role in closing the deal. "We proposed a more cost effective authentication solution that had the flexibility to grow as the University changes," John Sieg at ISM says. "DIGIPASS is a highly scalable and affordable solution, exactly fit for Penn State's needs. The total cost of ownership was considerably reduced as the fee per device is very reasonable and the average battery lifetime of five years and beyond offers a high return on investment." "VASCO's DIGIPASS technology helped us to significantly reduce costs, allowing a redirection of available funds into other areas," John Williams affirms.

POSITIVE PROOF OF IDENTITY

DIGIPASS adds an extra security layer to traditional password based security. At the push of a button, DIGIPASS generates a dynamic one-time password. The one-time password concept replaces static passwords with dynamic strong passwords based on a time principle. Since the passwords changes default every 32 seconds, fraudsters are forced to operate in real time, making batch processing of username and password-combinations or keystroke logging impossible.

When requested during the login procedure, University staff members enter the one-time password into the application's interface together with their login name and static password, hence providing positive proof of identity.



Faculty and staff can order DIGIPASS online at Penn State's eBuy website or directly at the Penn State Computer Store.

The integration of DIGIPASS into Penn State's existing IT infrastructure went smoothly, as the mainframe supported multiple authentication devices, allowing Penn State to make a clean replacement. VASCO's flexible licensing system allowed for a cost-efficient expansion of the amount of DIGIPASS users without the need for installing additional soft- or hardware.

Because the DIGIPASS authentication device is very intuitive to use, no training or manual was required ensuring a smooth transition.

SECURE REAL-TIME ACCESS TO ACADEMIC AND FINANCIAL RECORDS

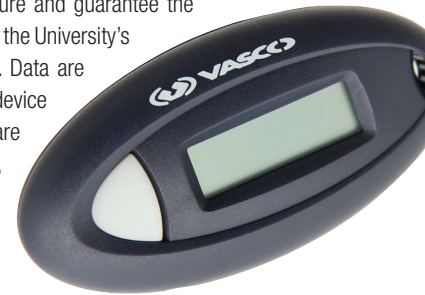
With DIGIPASS, faculty and staff are now able to access the university's online administration and business processes in a secure way through eLion.

eLion is a web based service for students, advisers and faculty providing secure real-time access to academic and financial records in the University's administrative database. Through eLION, authorized users can access data housed in the University's Integrated Business Information System, named IBIS, and the Integrated Students information System, named ISIS.

ISIS is the centralized student system that manages the records for all Penn State students at all Penn State locations. The web-based application manages student records from admission through graduation, including billing, course scheduling, student aid, transcripts and grading. Administrators access and update information of any student for which the user is authorized.

"Security standards must be very high as student electronic records are

accessed through an open internet connection," John Williams stated. "Confidentiality, data integrity and security of business critical information remains a top priority. In order to secure and guarantee the confidentiality of our student's data and the University's business processes, we took no risks. Data are only accessible by using a DIGIPASS device assuring that non-authorized persons are unable to retrieve them. With DIGIPASS, VASCO provides an effective and cost-conscious solution to suit the University's long-term authentication needs."



Objective

Implement two-factor authentication devices to secure Penn State's online administrative business processes at a reasonable cost.

Challenge

The authentication devices must to be fully compliant with the University's existing infrastructure without needing to deploy additional hardware.

Solution

DIGIPASS is an affordable solution that could be fully integrated within the third party's authentication package. The average battery lifetime of five years and beyond offers a high return on investment.

About Penn State University



Penn State was founded in 1855 as an agricultural college. The University has awarded more than a half-million degrees and has been Pennsylvania's largest source of baccalaureate degrees at least since the 1930s. Today Penn State is one of four 'state-related' universities with 19 colleges and 23 locations. More than 80,000 students are currently enrolled in a wide variety of academic programs.

About International Systems Marketing, Inc (ISM)



ISM, a proactive security solutions provider for wired and wireless networks, has been supplying superior fulfillment services, tier I and tier II support, teaming consulting services, and proven security solutions for the past 20 years. ISM provides information security solutions to commercial and federal clients with specific information technology requirements. Through the use of enterprise vulnerability testing and research, ISM provides strategic planning and development services for organizations wishing to maximize network resources within a secure environment. ISM has formed strategic partnerships with industry leaders in order to fulfill the unique computing requirements of today's technology-driven companies. You can see more about ISM at www.ism.com.

About VASCO

VASCO is a leading supplier of strong authentication and e-signature solutions and services specializing in Internet Security applications and transactions. VASCO has positioned itself as global software company for Internet Security and designs, develops, markets and supports patented DIGIPASS®, DIGIPASS PLUS®, VACMAN®, IDENTIKEY® and aXsGUARD® authentication products. VASCO's prime markets are the financial sector, enterprise security, e-commerce and e-government.

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