



LOS ANGELES WORLD AIRPORTS' BUSINESS CONTINUITY AND SYSTEM SECURITY RELY ON RSA

Anson Fong, chief information security officer for LAWA, observed, "More than 85 percent of the airports' functions are IT driven: We cover airport operations, law enforcement – including closed circuit television and 911 systems – finance, HR and marketing."

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING

Fong's priority for the airports is to ensure that all stakeholders – including passengers, tradespeople, airline employees, and LAWA staff – are provided with a safe and secure environment. To identify potential threats and sources of interruption, Fong's team launched an initiative, named the Business Continuity Information Security (BCIS) project. A key element of the project was to determine the likelihood of a specific event – such as a cyber attack, earthquake, power outage or IT system failure – occurring and to create a mitigation strategy for that incident based on criticality to the airports' ongoing operations.

The extensive assessment determined that cyber threats were the greatest single risk to operations and to public safety.

The project underscored the need to develop business continuity processes to ensure that functions across the airports could continue without interruption in the case of the failure of any one of the numerous supporting servers. Fong's team conducted Business Impact Analysis (BIA) workshops with all of the airports' departments to identify the systems that supported primary business functions.

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Anson Fong, Chief Information Security Officer, Los Angeles World Airports



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World Airports*

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) owns and manages two airports in Southern California: Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and Van Nuys Airport. LAX is the fourth busiest airport in the world and the second most active in the United States, serving more than 80 million passengers annually, and staffed by more than 4,000 people. While considerably smaller, Van Nuys Airport is one of the world's most popular general aviation airports, approaching several hundred thousand takeoffs and landings each year.

The internal and external dependencies in each department were mapped, including the relationships between LAWA and its vendors and contractors. “We helped each department develop comprehensive recovery procedures to utilize in the event of a system failure,” explained Fong. “The result was a set of specific steps to enable critical functions to be maintained with minimal interruption. We continue to conduct BIA workshops at six-month intervals to ensure that everything remains current.”

IMPROVING INCIDENT RESPONSE

Having successfully deployed the RSA Archer Suite in 2012 to oversee governance, risk and compliance performance, Fong’s organization subsequently utilized Archer’s Operational Risk Management module to decrease incident response times. To maximize the effectiveness of the BCIS project, Fong enthusiastically added the Business Resiliency module to his Archer Suite implementation.

One of Fong’s guiding principles is to ensure the alignment of IT security to LAWA business initiatives, he stated, “Because the vast majority of LAWA’s business functions and processes are powered by IT, it’s imperative to understand our business goals and to create a security strategy that is fully aligned with those objectives. Utilizing Archer’s Business Resiliency capabilities we’re able to update all of the BIA data online and keep it as a living document: This is a critical factor in enabling the operations and IT staff members to continually maintain the optimal alignment.”

COMBINING SECURITY DATA FOR PRIORITIZATION

For its security information and event management (SIEM) functions, LAWA relies on RSA NetWitness Platform, which also is integrated with RSA Archer Suite; facilitating the seamless exchange of information between the two systems.

The integration of threat intelligence and risk management data into a single view enables Fong’s staff to determine the criticality of both systems and business processes. “RSA really helps us to improve our incident response time because we can easily see all the data in one unified dashboard,” Fong remarked.

Because the organization has immediate access to all of its security incident recovery procedures in RSA Archer Suite, during any outage LAWA is able to prioritize and follow specific procedures for any scenario. Fong commented, “By integrating our BIA data with the SIEM information that we get from RSA NetWitness Platform, we’re able to optimally recover from any incidents.”

Fong noted, “NetWitness assembles data from threats occurring anywhere in the world and combines it with the RSA experts’ first-hand knowledge of preventing the attacks. This enables us to understand the context of a threat and to accurately determine the importance of security-related events that are occurring in our network.”

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Anson Fong, Chief Information Security Officer, Los Angeles World Airports

BUSINESS-DRIVEN SECURITY

For Fong, the RSA mantra of 'business-driven security' is a key contributor to his success. He commented, "We need to make sure that our security posture consistently mirrors the needs of the organization. RSA understands the importance of this connection and provides us with the solutions that ensure that our security strategy is always driven by the LAWA business objectives."

The LAWA CISO has relied on RSA solutions for over ten years: "I have always had a great relationship with RSA. I trust its staff and I'm glad to have such a strong partner in protecting our environment against cyber-attacks," Fong emphasized.

RECOGNIZED FOR SUCCESS

By demonstrating outstanding business value and thought-leadership in an IT security project, Fong and his team won the 2017 CSO50 Award for 'Aligning Proactive Security with Modern Threats,' and also secured the runner-up position in the prestigious 2017 InformationWeek 'IT Excellence Award in Security.'

The BCIS project accomplished Fong's goal of bringing business, IT and operations teams together, and the on-going BIA workshops ensure that alignment remains tight. "As chief information security officer and as a member of the LAWA team, it's very important to make sure we all work together to ensure the safety and security of our airports, not only in Los Angeles but across the rest of the world: and I'm confident that with RSA's support we can continue to succeed.," Fong concluded.

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ABOUT RSA

RSA offers business-driven security solutions that uniquely link business context with security incidents to help organizations manage risk and protect what matters most. RSA solutions are designed to effectively detect and respond to advanced attacks; manage user identities and access; and, reduce business risk, fraud, and cybercrime. RSA protects millions of users around the world and helps more than 90% of the Fortune 500 companies thrive in an uncertain, high-risk world. For more information, go to rsa.com.



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