

Protecto's solution helped a multinational telecommunication company comply with data protection regulations



The Problem

The multinational telecommunications giant moved its various CRM internal applications to Salesforce six years ago before privacy compliance became a major concern. At that time, the company did not have a policy on managing Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and data retention inside Salesforce.

However, due to the growing concern for customer privacy and data security, the company's customers started demanding better adherence to compliance. They want to know whether their PII data is being properly tracked, retained, and deleted at the end of its lifecycle.

As a result, the Salesforce applications team came under pressure to come up with a robust data retention and compliance plan. Initially, the IT applications team claimed that only four to five fields in Salesforce contained PII data. However, when the compliance person determined that PII is more widespread, the IT applications team embarked on a thorough compliance adherence plan. Over this timeframe, they wanted to ensure that all PII data was accounted for and properly removed.

Finally, the IT applications team decided to take action with the business group that sponsored an initiative to address the issue. A budget was set aside for security and compliance measures.

This was a positive step towards ensuring that the company complied with privacy regulations and protected its customers sensitive data.

The Challenges

Finding PII data across Salesforce

The company's Salesforce platform contained many data tables, some containing up to 1000 fields. There were at least 5 million rows of PII data stored in Salesforce, and this data could be found in unexpected places such as the comments/description field.

Expensive maintenance

The company had 14 Salesforce environments, including 2 sandboxes test environments, and a production environment. All these contained PII data, which was copied from production to QA and sandbox environments. The company paid millions of dollars per year to Salesforce for these services.

Multiple stakeholders

The company had moved the data from Salesforce to Azure for other teams to analyze the data. However, there was no clear idea on how long this data could be retained, and hence wanted to come up with a retention period that was suitable for all teams. The company wanted to explore whether they could anonymize old data so that the value of the data was retained while protecting PII data.

Need for data retention policy

The challenge was to develop a data retention policy that not only worked for all teams, but also complied with legal requirements. This involved identifying all instances of PII data in Salesforce and ensuring that it was properly retained / deleted when necessary. With so much data spread across different Salesforce environments, this was a complex task that required careful planning.

The Solution

Protecto's initial analysis revealed that both the technical and business teams were unaware of the privacy risks present in their data environments, which could potentially lead to significant financial and reputational damage. As a result, the company utilized Protecto's Salesforce connector to scan their data for PII and identify areas for improvement.

All-inclusive PII scanning

Protecto facilitated the prioritization of a PII scan of all data within Salesforce, which allowed the team to identify any potential risks and take necessary actions to mitigate them. This proactive measure helped identify all sensitive data within Salesforce such as names, addresses, email addresses, social security numbers, and other sensitive information.

Prioritizing risks

The scan then generated a report that identified potential risks and recommended actions to mitigate them. By prioritizing the PII risks, Protecto ensured that the most critical risks are addressed first, reducing the overall impact of potential data breaches or security incidents.

Pseudonymizing old data

The company wished to retain the value of historical data while also adhering to privacy regulations that prohibited the storage of PII. So instead of permanently erasing old data, the company decided to implement data masking techniques. By implementing Protecto's intelligent tokenization approach, the company safely masked the personal data, but the data is still usable in case they need it to analyze at a later stage.

Monitoring risks

Protecto provided ongoing monitoring and support to the company for the remaining data, tracking for any potential risks and assisting in the management of data retention policies. By continuously monitoring and addressing data risks, Protecto ensured that the company's data protection strategy remained effective, and that sensitive data was always safeguarded.

The Benefits

Reduced PII sprawl across multiple Salesforce environments

Initially, the PII data was dispersed and unregulated among various systems, posing a significant risk of data breaches and privacy infringements. By implementing Protecto to eliminate PII at its origin, the risk of downstream data breaches and PII proliferation has been curbed. Furthermore, it was challenging for the company to continuously monitor and safeguard PII data.

Reduction in old PII

The company also experienced a reduction in old PII data. Protecto's solution enabled the company to identify and mask PII data that was no longer required while retaining the value of historical data. This approach ensured that the company remained compliant with data privacy regulations while also ensuring that they could leverage the insights from historical data.

Mapping of PII

Protecto's solution facilitated the mapping of PII data, providing a comprehensive view of sensitive data across Salesforce. This insight enabled the company to manage sensitive data more effectively, ensuring that data was classified, managed, and protected according to its sensitivity.

Better data management

The implementation of Protecto's solution resulted in better data management. By providing visibility and control over sensitive data, the company could manage its data assets more effectively, reducing the risks associated with data breaches and other security incidents.

Maintaining data compliance

Protecto's solution enabled the company to maintain data compliance by adhering to privacy regulations and standards. Protecto's solution ensured that sensitive data was handled according to data privacy regulations such as GDPR, CCPA, and HIPAA, reducing the risks of non-compliance and potential legal penalties.

Next Steps

Overall, the implementation of Protecto's solution brought about significant benefits to the company in terms of data security, management, and compliance. Protecto's comprehensive approach to data protection ensured that sensitive data was safeguarded, and the organization could continue to leverage the value of historical data.

While Salesforce may have been the initial focus, the company realized that managing PII data was not limited to just one system. The company likely had other systems within its infrastructure that could also contain sensitive information, such as partner portals and other on-premises applications. Therefore, it was crucial for the company to develop a comprehensive plan for managing PII data across all systems and applications.

Protecto continues to assist the company in expanding their PII scanning and intelligent pseudonymization capabilities beyond Salesforce to other data sources, such as Azure, ServiceNow, etc. By doing so, the company is having a more complete understanding of their data landscape and is better equipped to identify and mitigate potential risks associated with sensitive information.

About Protecto

Protecto provides data privacy and protection in a single, easy-to-use platform. Applying privacy engineering and AI to give instant visibility into privacy risks across data sources, Protecto's Data Posture Intelligence provides actionable insights to reduce privacy compliance efforts, eliminate costs in data security risks and save millions in overall privacy-related overhead costs.

Contact our data privacy and security experts to learn how to discover privacy risks and safeguard your sensitive data.

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