State of Louisiana Improves Citizen Experience, Saves $70 Million in IT Consolidation

Executive summary

The state of Louisiana recently consolidated all of its IT departments across 20 executive branch agencies, bringing 850 staffers and petabytes of data together. The newly unified department has been tasked with legacy consolidation and modernization efforts to improve efficiencies, cut costs and enhance service delivery to its core set of customers—the state agencies and citizens. Since deploying Splunk Enterprise, the state has seen benefits, including:

- $70 million in savings by accelerating modernization and legacy consolidation efforts
- Improving efficiencies and customer experiences with streamlined IT and centralized data management
- Driving business process efficiencies and cost savings with a shared services model

Why Splunk

Previously, the state of Louisiana lacked central master data management across its agencies. Because data resided in many locations, citizens had to establish separate accounts with each agency it interacted with, such as the Health Department or Children and Family Services. State IT staff began discussions around centralizing data, establishing master records and ensuring data security. Then, the federal Department of Health and Human Services, which sought an alternative to issuing grants to different agencies to build similar IT systems, sparked the state IT consolidation effort.

Now Louisiana is successfully implementing a shared services model across the agencies, streamlining processes, saving time for citizens and IT staff and enabling fine-grained usage-based agency billing. Splunk Enterprise is the glue that holds the modules together and the single pane-of-glass through which to manage them, without requiring staff hours to monitor logs manually. Through this consolidation and modernization effort, the state has achieved $70 million in cost savings and sunset many legacy systems.

Not only was the Splunk platform "by far the most robust for us to handle petabytes of data," says director of data center operations Derek Williams, but "we had some other interesting challenges where we could leverage it."

Industry

- Public sector

Splunk Use Cases

- IT operations

Challenges

- Disparate legacy systems including Nagios and other IT infrastructure monitoring tools
- Limited budget
- No central data management strategy

Business Impact

- Single pane-of-glass for monitoring agency operations
- Savings of $70 million by accelerating modernization and legacy consolidation efforts
- Improved efficiencies and customer experiences with streamlined IT and centralized data management
- Driving business process efficiencies and cost savings with a shared services model
- More effective service delivery with granular insights into healthcare enrollment and usage tracking
- Enabling agencies to focus on their business rather than IT maintenance and contracts

Splunk Products

- Splunk Enterprise

Beyond log monitoring, Splunk Enterprise provides granular insights into business processes, enabling the state to improve services to be more effective. As an example, Williams's team discovered that usage of the Medicare and Medicaid enrollment process was astronomically high. A deeper introspection revealed that people were enrolling as a way to see if they were eligible instead of following the process they were supposed to. "So it goes beyond IT to show Splunk Enterprise could not only monitor servers in a network operations center (NOC), but also look at the business process and provide feedback and insights," Williams says.

Going beyond the bottom line

Previously, the state's challenge was to handle invoicing to each agency in a fair and transparent way without any black-box billing of flat rates or amounts. With the consolidation and deployment of the shared services, state agencies get a bill for what they use. With Splunk Enterprise, agencies now get an accurate read on their usage, such as the number of documents stored, the amount of storage consumed and the number of business rules run for analysis. The state is already planning the next step: customer dashboards to show not only that agencies' servers and applications are up and running but how much they cost, providing more transparency from the governor's office on down.

"Instead of the agencies requesting more servers, they tell us about their business needs and we help them architect the systems to help meet those needs. Splunk is really about solving a business need and that's what I love about it most. Any time we can have a single product that does a whole lot of things for us, and we keep finding new uses for, that's a huge win."

Derek Williams
Director of Data Center Operations,
State of Louisiana

"Splunk is extremely efficient for us and makes the best use of taxpayer dollars. Not only does it save us money from having to do things manually with multiple systems, but it supports transparency. It gives us the ability to show people exactly how things are being used and why."

Derek Williams
Director of Data Center Operations,
State of Louisiana

Business of the agency

One additional benefit of the shared services model is that it is enabling agencies to focus on their business rather than spending time on IT maintenance and contracts. "Instead of the agencies requesting more servers, they tell us about their business needs, and we help them architect the systems to help meet those needs," Williams says. "Splunk is really about solving a business need and that's what I love about it most. Any time we can have a single product that does a whole lot of things for us, and we keep finding new uses for, that's a huge win."

Looking ahead and to the cloud

While the enterprise architecture is currently on premises, there is a cost and efficiency push for the state to expand its existing cloud presence. Deployment tools and containers are giving IT the ability to take an infrastructure and spin it up in the cloud, while on-demand usage is freeing the team from having to buy extra hardware for a spike such as a user enrollment period. The option to throttle up for a month and then cut back, or to have data centers dispersed across the U.S. in a disaster recovery scenario, add flexibility that would otherwise be formidably complicated.

"State projects are multiyear projects," says Williams. "We know we're going to build an enterprise architecture to adapt to future tools and we need to make sure our technology partners are doing the same. Seeing Splunk investing in the cloud, always pushing forward, gives us the confidence to say, 'Hey, as we build out they're going to be right there with us.'"

Download Splunk for free or get started with the free cloud trial. Whether cloud, on-premises, or for large or small teams, Splunk has a deployment model that will fit your needs.

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