CASE STUDY

The sky's the limit thanks to myID

Europe's leading entertainment company paves the way for smooth expansion, while saving time and money with its centralised identity management platform myID

Key Facts

Company
Sky

Industry
Media & Communications

Country
United Kingdom

Employees
25,700

Website
www.sky.com

Challenges

To help its business grow and empower its people, Sky wanted to create a centralised identity service, bringing together tools, governance and processes to manage profiles for its 25,700 employees.

Results

- Managers are empowered with web portal for managing team members' access
- Identity and access strategy is set to enable smoother international expansion
- Enhanced user information delivers better decision-making about data access
- Payment Card Industry compliance is easier thanks to automated, centralised system

Products

Identity Manager

Password Manager

Since the early 1990s, television and media have driven changes in technology. From digital TV to on-demand services, Sky has always been at the forefront of innovations in the U.K.

Formed in 1989, it is now Europe's leading entertainment firm, offering digital television and broadband services to 22 million customers across five European countries. The company has annual revenues of £12 billion and is the continent's biggest investor in television. Sky's success is not based just on what the firm does, but also how it does it. Its commitment to social responsibility has seen Sky named as one of the top 10 green companies in the world by Newsweek, and one of The Times top 50 employers for women.

ONE IDENTITY

> "Each day we need to give people great reasons to choose Sky. By providing a better level of service to our core business, we're helping to make Sky's offering more attractive to current and potential customers."
>
> *Scott Cornfield, Identity and Access Manager, Sky*

The organisation employs around 26,000 people across Europe, which includes around 5,000 staff from recent acquisitions of Sky Italia and Sky Deutschland. With such a large number of employees, almost all of whom are using Sky's corporate IT systems, managing and tracking user identities is no small undertaking. IT staff at Sky had several identity and access management (IAM) solutions in place, but these were implemented over time to meet localised needs across the business. As a result, there was no single system that covered the whole user base.

Creating an IAM hub

Scott Cornfield, Identity and Access Manager, and his colleague Gareth MacGuire, Identity Management Technical Lead, took on the task of creating a centralised platform for Sky's corporate IAM needs. Cornfield says: "IAM was devolved to individual support teams and each team had its own way of coping. The teams were doing a great job, but nobody in the company had a central view of IAM, and lots of people were spending time and money managing a complex network of systems. We knew there had to be a better, simpler way of doing things."

The original driver for the project was the need to replace Sky's first-generation identity implementations, as well as deliver business and security benefits such as triggering automatic shutdown of access based on information from HR. This terminates all access to Sky's enterprise systems, including its Payment Card Industry (PCI) system. Since its inception, Sky has kept on growing, and Cornfield made a strong case that the firm would soon become too large to support manual IAM. This helped to solidify Sky's plans to kick off the programme.

Sky talked to various vendors about consolidating all IAM functions into one tool. It also wanted to cut the cost of maintaining the legacy identity initiatives. Ease of implementation was a significant factor. The winning solution had to be highly customisable, but relatively easy to configure. Sky saw that One Identity could meet these goals, as well as offer additional benefits. Specifically:

- It was encouraged to see that One Identity's references in this area came from companies with small, efficient IT teams like Sky's.
- A proof of concept showed that Sky could achieve its goals faster and with minimal burden on the IT team.

The core of Sky's IAM model, which it calls myID, is Identity Manager with Password Manager. This enables Cornfield, MacGuire and the team to offer user provisioning and deprovisioning, password services and reporting. The goal was to create an identity solution providing standardised services to all stakeholders. Through Password Manager, users can self-reset or synchronise their passwords across all connected systems.

Sky now has around 500 managers looking after about 15,000 end users. Everyone – from the CEO to the engineers who install dishes – has a profile. MacGuire says: "It was easy to deploy to the internal corporate estate. We had it up and running within five months."

Power to the business

The organisation now has control over levels of access to Sky systems. For example, as a PCI company, Sky has to be able to certify at any time that the right people have access to the right systems. Previously, the technology teams would have to work independently to keep track of this information and then manage the responsibility of periodically removing access. Now with myID, the business is empowered to authorise employees' access via one web portal. This means technology teams no longer have to keep track, and the business doesn't need to learn new attestation methods for each system. Now, individual line managers can authorise their team members' access via one web portal. This means they no longer have to keep track manually or learn new attestation methods. They can even allow split access in cases where an employee needs different access rights at different times because they perform more than one role.

The benefits of automation allow Sky to further improve the efficiency and security around managing the user lifecycle for access. "We recognise that Sky is a choice that our customers make. Each day we need to give people great reasons to choose Sky. By providing a better level of service to our core business, we're helping to make Sky's offering more attractive to current and potential customers," says Cornfield. "What this means in real terms is that we can invest even more in delivering great content that our customers love."

A full picture of access information

The business is now able to make smarter user and data access decisions based on the quality of information it gets from the myID platform. Before, users might be recorded in a system as a two or three-digit number in a database, but now each user has a name, plus information on where they work in the business and what systems they need access to. Cornfield says: "Operations are getting smarter. So, for example, we're able to predict access levels based on job role information from HR. This means that customer service staff – as well as retail sales staff in the Sky stores – are equipped with all of the information they need, and can hit the ground running.

Previously, we had to spend a lot of time getting the data in and connecting systems. Now, we can afford to be more creative. We're looking at saving the company time and money, and removing the element of human error wherever possible."

Will this platform make Sky's growth easier? "Definitely," says MacGuire. "Now we have a team with skills and experience in deploying and running the platform for a large user base. I guess we have transformed Sky's opinion of IAM into being a feature-rich platform that empowers the business. We've achieved an incredible amount so far with a small team, and the Sky's the limit!

About One Identity

The One Identity family of identity and access management (IAM) solutions, offers IAM for the real world including business-centric, modular and integrated, and future-ready solutions for identity governance, access management, and privileged management.

Learn more: OneIdentity.com

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