

# Case Study

## Axiad Cloud



**Tony Ventura**

Director of Information Technology Services at a government with 1,001-5,000 employees

- ✓ Review by a Real User
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### What is our primary use case?

Our primary use case, and the reason we initially bought the solution, was to migrate our on-premises PKI environment into Axiad Cloud, and move all of our certificate management.

We have about 3,200 smart cards in the form of E-tokens, which have a PKI certificate on them. We have been managing them through our own PKI but we're moving that to Axiad. We have another 4,500 machine certificates for desktops, laptops, and servers, that we are also moving to Axiad.

Axiad is a private instance in a public cloud.

### How has it helped my organization?

There are so many ways it has improved the

way our organization functions. One is the fact that it has allowed us to enable a self-service password reset. Typically, our biggest service desk volume, about one-third of our calls, was related to authentication-specific issues with expired certificates or not being able to provide a challenge-response, or forgetting passwords. A lot of that stuff is now automated and democratized in the product so that users can do those things themselves.

The last time we did a token refresh, we literally had to provision 3,200 E-tokens. We had someone sitting at a desk all day every day for about three weeks to provision all of them. And then we had to take a high-touch approach to send somebody out with a box full of tokens and hand them out to people, sit them down and have them change their password for the first time. Now, our approach is much different. We send blank tokens to people with instructions.



They log in and do it on their own. It's a complete change from a full, high-touch IT involvement to a much more cost-effective and resource-effective, low-touch self-enrollment.

Axiad has saved us time, for sure. Just in the provisioning process it has saved us at least 200 hours, and that's a conservative estimate for one person and one part of the life cycle.

And while I'm a little reluctant to use words that have big meanings, like "every use case," Axiad overwhelmingly helps enable passwordless authentication for workstation log on, VPN, and cloud applications.

## What is most valuable?

One of the things that we find the most valuable is not actually a feature, but it's the fact that we are not managing the environment ourselves. Because it is a managed solution in the cloud, it takes away a lot of the drudgery of having to run our own PKI environment.

And the product has proven itself to be incredibly flexible and has been able to address all of our pain points. That's why we bought it. And even while we've been going through it, new pain points or challenges keep coming up, and Axiad has been able to deal with all of them. It was very impressive in terms of its utility right from the get-go, and has shown its ongoing utility when we have reached these catch points, issues it has been able to resolve.

And when it comes to enrolling a user, it's super easy with One Click Issuance. It's far easier than

the solution we replaced. I haven't put a stopwatch on it, but I'm sure it takes less than a minute with Axiad, whereas before it was taking three to five minutes. It's so easy now that we can offload the process to our clients who can self-enroll. Previously, we would have to do the enrollment process because it was so complicated.

In addition, it's super simple for deploying and managing authentication devices. Our IT department is rather small, so all the incremental wins that we can get are hugely important to us.

## What needs improvement?

We would prefer that the solution be hosted in Canada because we're a Canadian entity. That would be nice to have. It's not a feature, as such, but it would really make us a lot happier if it could be located in Canada.

## For how long have I used the solution?

We've been in a relationship with Axiad for about 18 months.

## What do I think about the stability of the solution?

I haven't heard of any stability challenges.



## What do I think about the scalability of the solution?

I believe it's scalable, absolutely. We're relatively small in the grand scheme of things. Even our biggest use case is probably really small compared to other agencies, but I have no concerns.

At this point we're about one-sixth of the way through our deployment of the Axiad Cloud solution. That means we're not at a point where we can say we've eliminated or even greatly reduced the issues that it's addressing, because of the small deployment numbers. But we certainly see the ease of use at this point. We expect to get to 100 percent deployment, and we are looking for future use cases to help amalgamate platforms.

## How are customer service and support?

From what I have heard, the support has been outstanding.

## How would you rate customer service and support?

Positive

## Which solution did I use previously and why did I switch?

Our old solution was SafeNet Authentication Manager and the way it was architected and built wasn't very good to begin with. It wasn't ever a very modern product, even when we first bought it. We also made the switch because SafeNet was end-of-life and because the vendor was getting out of that space. We were never really thrilled with them, but we didn't have a lot of choice, so we stuck with them.

Whereas Axiad is built with the most modern approaches and it works super fast because it's well designed.

Our old solution was cumbersome and inflexible. There were a lot of problems that we just had to live with because there was no way to address them. We were using it largely because 90 percent of services like ours in Ontario were doing the same thing. It was a necessary evil and we adopted it because there was no better option seven or eight years ago when we bought that solution.

## How was the initial setup?

The initial setup of Axiad was very straightforward. It's a very guided process. Everything is there for you out-of-the-box. I believe it was set up in one day. There's not a lot of complexity to it. PKI is a complex thing to begin with, but what's great about Axiad Cloud is that the complexity has been hidden



behind the beauty of the software.

Our implementation strategy was to first stand it up in a proof of concept, but we stood it up in the same way that we would eventually migrate it to production. We played around with it, played with the features, and simulated workflows. Then we slowly started to roll people into it. We then adopted that PoC environment as our full, final production environment.

Ongoing maintenance has been relatively low so far and I don't expect it to grow very much. Because it's a managed solution, it requires a fractional FTE.

## What about the implementation team?

I think we used a little bit of Axiad's customer care for deployment, but it was so simple that even that engagement wasn't very long.

## What was our ROI?

We have seen a soft return on investment in the reduction in staff time and complexity.

## What's my experience with pricing, setup cost, and licensing?

Aside from the pricing of a solution, people need to look at the true costs of running their own PKI. Don't just focus on the hardware or

software costs of acquiring a solution, but look at it from the perspective that so much of what it takes to run a PKI environment has to do with the people who are running it. Consider how big a challenge that is and how much time and complexity there is, and the room for error. In short, look at the total cost of ownership and not just the cost of acquisition.

## Which other solutions did I evaluate?

We looked at a few options, including doing things ourselves by running our own PKI, but that is costly and very complex. We couldn't find any solutions that met our needs other than Axiad.

## What other advice do I have?

The biggest lesson I've learned using Axiad Cloud is that it has really helped to highlight some of the mistakes we made in the past. In particular, we made the mistake of deciding to do PKI ourselves, rather than outsourcing it and doing it this way via a managed service.

These days, anyone who is not using multifactor authentication likely cannot demonstrate due diligence or due care in their cyber program. Everyone needs to be doing multifactor.

It's been so good that even the new challenges that we've had have already been addressed by the product. It seems to be very well thought out. Are we going to encounter something



where it could be better? Probably. But as of right now, it has been able to handle any problem that we have thrown at it.

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