LastPass•••|

Success Story: University of Oklahoma

"One of the easiest and more popular technology products we've been able to deploy and use. We've had a very positive experience with LastPass and their team."
Aaron Baillio

Challenge

Established in 1890, University of Oklahoma is a public research university based in Norman, Oklahoma with an undergraduate population of 20,000+ and over 10,000 staff members, including faculty. With three separate campuses and few overarching security policies, Aaron Baillio, Chief Information Security Officer, was tasked with building a cybersecurity program that would introduce a unified process and mitigate security threats.

The most public facing and pivotal issue they faced was compromised email accounts; if an employee was phished, they would start sending thousands of emails and then the number of compromised accounts would exponentially grow. *"We recognized the culprit was weak passwords and that the introduction of a password policy could mitigate these attacks. Once we combined operations, my focus was to build out a strategy our staff could comfortably adhere to."*

Aaron recognized that passwords were a pain point; staff and faculty were struggling to create complex twelve-digit passwords with embedded key characteristics. Their main request from feedback sessions was for investment in a password management tool that could help simplify the process.

Solution

With LastPass, the security team offered an olive branch to struggling staff members by providing a password management tool that included a password generator, autofill functionality, and dark web monitoring to prevent phishing attacks. *"LastPass had been on our radar for a while, but what really stuck out during our conversation was the 'Premium as a Perk' for students that they offer. We recognized it as a great opportunity to invest in our students and protect them on and off campus,"* notes Aaron. By extending the tool to students, they could ensure their students' confidential data, such as financial records and grade reports remained safe, while also instilling good password hygiene within their formative years.

Aaron and team found that the administrative controls provided within LastPass are easy and straightforward. University of Oklahoma leveraged the managed company feature to teams who wanted to retain control and allow them to act as super admins of their respective departments, so they can appropriately reset accounts and access shared folders, whilst still adhering to high-level policies. Staff and faculty found further value in enabling multi-factor authentication (MFA) and using tools like password sharing to minimize risks . *"I noticed that staff like to use Microsoft MFA with their vault for added security. We also have a lot of distributed IT groups that use the vault to share access for systems they collaboratively manage. It really demonstrates how LastPass has helped the team to be more aware of security risks,"* comments Aaron.

The LastPass password manager was the right solution to accommodate Aaron's objective to unify staff and support them in adhering to security policies. Aaron states: *"Password hygiene is a key pillar to our cybersecurity infrastructure, LastPass helped us to build a standardized policy for all our campuses and features like the password generator establish password complexity."* It was very important for University of Oklahoma that from a technology and policy perspective, all staff members adhered to the same expectations. With LastPass's sleek and easy to use interface, Aaron recognized that there were little to no complaints in the adoption process. He further realized that some staff members were already avid LastPass users and with University of Oklahoma's investment they were able to absorb their costs and also offer them LastPass accounts as an added benefit, meaning that everyone on campus (faculty, staff, students) are given complementary accounts for use at home.

> **"We're now able to work in partnership with staff and students thanks to LastPass, which is what we've always wanted, a unified approach."**

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Results

Through their deployment approach, they invested in 50,000 licenses, securing a LastPass account for each staff, student and faculty member. Starting strong with 50% adoption in the first two days, they currently maintain a monthly average of 65% adoption.

University of Oklahoma's main goal was to encourage better password hygiene and complexity, most recently they observed that only three users out of 15,000 had created a weak master password, demonstrating that their investment in LastPass has encouraged the team to be more password savvy. In the past two years, Aaron acknowledges that due to improved passwords which significantly mitigated any phishing attempts, the team were able to implement overarching password policies. Notably, college or department-based password reset policies that were triggered in as little as 90 days, were replaced with an annual reset policy for all staff and faculty members.

Aaron concludes: *"A lot of staff and students are taking advantage of it, which is great to see, and the university manages significantly less password change requests. We've found it to be very intuitive and easy to use".*

> **"LastPass made password management simple, it softened the introduction of policies for us so we could build a strong security structure, whilst making everyone's life easier at the same time."**
>
> **Aaron Baillio**

Learn how University of Oklahoma increased their password security using LastPass

Get in Touch

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