PII

Cybersecurity
In Education

Management of Personalized Identifiable Information (PII) in Higher Education

ALCHEMI

TRANSFORMING DATA

Powered by

Citadel TEK

Overview

In normal course of a day, multiple employees might handle tuition, fundraising, or other content that might include PII data. Those files can be saved anywhere – on the network, on their personal computers, or even in the cloud exposing the university to significant penalties and a loss of reputation if that information were to be exposed. ALCHEMI was designed to solve these types of problems, overlaying the existing environment, identifying suspect content and making sure that content is dealt with in the desired manner.

Challenge

A small private university in Maryland with just over 4,000 undergraduate students is facing the same dilemma that all universities face when it comes to the protection of PII data. The campus has migrated to a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) model where employees use their own personal computers (laptops, tablets, and phones) to accomplish day-to-day tasks, expanding the risk of a PII data exposure. Until now there hasn't been a viable option to continuously identify and remove suspect files across the various systems. Additionally, during this process, they would like to collect all files with PII content, for historical and audit purposes, into a central repository that has limited user access.

Solution

The ALCHEMI solution from CitadelTek transforms how content is accessed, shared and analyzed, unlocking the value of data and making it useful well beyond its original intent. At the core of ALCHEMI is its Insight Engine, which automatically discovers, extracts and enhances data.

The ALCHEMI app (available on MacOS and Windows) automatically scans the computer's file system, creating a unified view of content across the environment. A secondary process indexes the textual and metadata content of identified files storing all this information in the central ALCHEMI system.

ALCHEMI provides a simple mechanism for administrators to create custom terms based on their unique taxonomy and lexicon (any combination of key words, phrases or numbers). These custom terms can be combined with other terms to search the index and apply a tag to any content matching the results. In this manner ALCHEMI automatically classifies any file containing PII content specific to the university.

The built in data management functionality of ALCHEMI allows for explicit actions to occur based on the tag that has been applied. Specific to this use case, ALCHEMI is configured to copy any PII tagged file, writing it to a directory on a network file server and then delete that file from the host system.

Results

ALCHEMI went beyond the requested capability of identifying PII content as a one-time event, providing the university with a continuous risk mitigation solution for their entire staff across the various systems. The automated data management capability added simplicity while removing the risk of human error in an area of governance where any error can be very costly.