Public government agency moves to Bitwarden for its secure, dynamic cross-collection model

The City of Albany, Oregon, upholds security-first reputation with on-premises password management.

Get the full interactive view at https://bitwarden.com/nl-nl/resources/public-government-agency-moves-to-bitwarden/

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Overview

Size of company: 500 employees

Industry: Government

Locations/offices: 1

Number of seats purchased: 12, with plans to expand initially to 100, then 300

Members of the IT team: 12

Albany is the 11th largest city in the state of Oregon. Similar to other local governments, it oversees important municipal functions such as public safety and public works operations. The nature of its scope and reach also means it must store and transfer sensitive data, mandating the need for a password management solution that easily and securely manages credentials and high-value information.

Previously using Keeper, the Albany IT team had two key requirements for their next password manager: The ability to self host, and a secure and dynamic cross-collection model. Recognizing that Keeper was not a viable long-term option for protecting high-value secrets within the public sector, the IT team decided to replace it with a solution that met its criteria: Bitwarden.

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Solution: Bitwarden Collections foster visibility, enable customization

Bitwarden Collections and its overarching folder structure, along with the ability to assign role-based access, was a huge selling point for Albany.

"With Bitwarden, a single item can be placed in more than one location at once," said Sean Park, Chief Information Officer (CIO) with the city of Albany. "Updating it in one location updates it everywhere."

According to Park, without a cross-collection sync model, administrators endure administrative tasks such as duplicating items to make them available for separate user groups whenever a change is made or if it is deleted and constantly reviewing collections for old or outdated logins in shared collections. Not only is this tedious, it poses serious security risks.

Park cited Keeper's 'lack of visibility' as a sizable problem, noting Bitwarden offers granularity and a 360-degree view of employee access. "We're thrilled with the Bitwarden Collection structure," said Park. "The Bitwarden "search" function also works incredibly well. From a discovery standpoint, someone wanting to find a set of credentials can easily find them."

In addition to making it easy to source credentials, the Bitwarden Collection structure enables organizations to nest credentials in a way that makes hierarchical sense from a security perspective. Said Park, "We can limit access to credentials on a need-to-know, privileged

basis, which is important for government agencies."

Bitwarden self-host option enables City of Albany to uphold public agency reputation

Another driving factor behind the decision to embrace Bitwarden was the ability to host the Bitwarden software on-premises and its fast and intuitive interface. "On the IT side, which holds the crown jewel of credentials for Albany, we knew we needed to self host," said Park.

Albany prides itself on creating and maintaining a culture of security, especially in light of the fact that it is responsible for securing vast troves of critical data. "There is a public agency reputation at the state level with other cities and counties - we get together twice a year to talk about this - and the ability to have a secure on-premises password management solution backed by a vendor dedicated to the on-premises model is of paramount importance," said Park.

According to Park, another big selling point is the Bitwarden commitment toward regularly conducting comprehensive third-party security audits with credible firms: "It is important to us that audit reports are available. The fact that Bitwarden embraces them and publishes the reports plays to the notion that open source security is a huge priority. The Bitwarden SOC audits, in particular, are really critical to me and our network security team. Bitwarden thoroughly embodies the security mindset."

Bitwarden implementation: "Zero to online in 15 minutes"

"With Bitwarden it's much easier to store credentials where they need to be," said Park. "We all use Bitwarden a little bit differently. Some use the desktop app, some use the browser extension. Whenever I come across a new credential, it takes 10 seconds to add it. We didn't have that capability before."

Park also described the installation and maintenance of Bitwarden as 'dead simple' and lauded the fact that users can go from 'zero to online in about 15 minutes'.

"I can't say the same about the rest of the competition, said Park. "We recommend Bitwarden for ease-of-use, accessibility, security, transparency, and the fact that it's open source. While cost is a consideration too, the other criteria trumps it. It's more important to us than cost, because good security costs money. Bitwarden has been a great choice for us."

Get started with Bitwarden

Learn more about what Bitwarden can do for your business and sign up for a free 7-day trial!