

Verisk Increases Modern Workplace Productivity by Reducing Blind Spots with Zscaler Digital Experience



Verisk Analytics

www.verisk.com

Location: Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

Industry: Financial Services & Insurance

Customer Size: Approximately 9,000 employees at more than 100 offices in 34 countries

Verisk is a global predictive analytics and decision-support firm based in Jersey City, New Jersey, providing solutions to more than 70 percent of FORTUNE 100 enterprises. Customers in the insurance, energy and specialized markets, and financial services industries rely on Verisk's advanced technologies to manage risks, enhance decision-making and improve operating efficiency. Since 1971, Verisk has been making the world better, safer, and stronger.

Adopting zero trust reveals visibility need

After a period of explosive growth, Verisk began a cloud transformation initiative that included adopting a zero trust security approach. Zero trust delivered advanced access and protection, but the company's traditional application performance monitoring tools were insufficient for diagnosing certain user experience issues.

"We lacked the telemetry and information about how applications were performing from a Verisk employee's perspective," explained Jeff Negrete, Vice President of Infrastructure and Operations. "When employees reported an issue, the source could be an app, the path to the app, the hosting platform, a corporate device, an employee's home network, or any combination of these factors, but we lacked the capability to pinpoint the cause."

ZDX eliminates performance blind spots

A respected predictive analytics firm founded 50 years ago, Verisk is committed to helping its customers understand the true risks facing their businesses so they can make more informed decisions.

CHALLENGE

Obtain the visibility and insights required for delivering premier modern workplace experiences

SOLUTION

- Zscaler™ Zero Trust Exchange™
- Zscaler Digital Experience™ (ZDX™)
- Zscaler Internet Access™ (ZIA™)
- Zscaler Private Access™ (ZPA™)

OUTCOMES

- Pinpoints the source of a chronic 4-month performance issue in minutes
- Achieves unified and centralized user experience visibility to help DevOps and Help Desk teams speed issue resolution
- Gains AI-powered analytics and real-time insights that quantify experiences across applications globally
- Improves IT efficiency by proactively identifying latency issues, deflecting support cases, and identifying device upgrade opportunities
- Supports the overall strategic all-cloud transformation and adoption of a zero trust security approach

To stay at the forefront of supplying decision-support solutions, Verisk has implemented a significant innovation agenda, including unique applications of artificial intelligence and machine learning for structured and unstructured data, and has executed a targeted M&A strategy. As a result, the company has significantly extended the solutions it offers the industries it serves and its global reach.

By seeking to unify its innovation pipeline and acquisitions via its all-cloud initiative, Verisk both powers its modern workforce and improves the delivery of products and services to its customers. Because zero trust security is a critical component of any cloud strategy, Verisk conducted an extensive solution evaluation and selected the **Zscaler Zero Trust Exchange**.

"Zscaler's solutions offered the most comprehensive set of zero trust services and the highest return on our investment," Negrete said.

Then, as the platform rollout proceeded, the pandemic sent Verisk's employees home to work remotely, spotlighting the need for a user experience monitoring solution compatible with zero trust. Verisk conducted an additional market review, along with a thorough proof of value (POV), and determined that **Zscaler Digital Experience (ZDX)** provided the detailed end-user monitoring the company required.

"As a service that's tightly integrated with our other Zscaler solutions, ZDX provided us with unified, granular, real-time insights into application, network, and endpoint device health," Negrete said.

Integrated, unified solution closes monitoring gaps

By implementing ZDX to facilitate gathering and analyzing telemetry data, Verisk is adding another fundamental service to its Zero Trust Exchange deployment, which originally included **Zscaler Internet Access (ZIA)** and **Zscaler Private Access (ZPA)**.

Using ZIA, Verisk protects users and devices accessing cloud-delivered SaaS applications via the internet. ZPA complements ZIA by furnishing VPN-free access to private applications running within the company's data center or its **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** deployment.

With ZDX, Verisk simplifies user experience monitoring versus investing in a third-party add-on.

"ZDX helps us close troubleshooting gaps for our support teams, especially DevOps and Help Desk, as we continue moving our business applications to the cloud and SaaS, while simultaneously supporting our newly distributed enterprise workforce," said Sophie Twu, Director of Network Engineering at Verisk.

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– **Jeff Negrete**
Vice President of
Infrastructure and
Operations
Verisk

Resolving performance issues in minutes, not months

According to Twu, ZDX is improving IT's ability to serve its customers and realize efficiencies in the process. This includes reducing the time required to identify and correct an experience roadblock.

"For example, a member of our team was experiencing chronic performance issues over a four-month period but, prior to ZDX, we couldn't locate the source of the problem," Twu said. "With ZDX, it only took minutes to determine that the configurations on his home Wi-Fi router were the culprit."

Faster complaint resolution also boosts morale for the IT team, Negrete points out. "Every member of our team wants to help, they want to feel like they're making a contribution to our teammates' experience, so we were relieved to discover our colleague's issue wasn't related to our networking setup and that we could finally solve the puzzle," he said. "Getting to the source of an issue is exceedingly beneficial to IT and our customers."

IT visibility enables reaching out to users

Other benefits of ZDX at Verisk can include proactively detecting latency issues when users access external applications, such as **Okta** for workforce identity management. By reaching out to users when an issue is detected, or when a device hardware upgrade opportunity is identified, Verisk can deflect support cases.

"ZDX capabilities like the intuitive management dashboard, **Deep Tracing** sessions, and integration with **Splunk**, can enable the quick identification and quantification of issues from one central interface," Twu said. "It can help us be more efficient and gives us visibility into devices and local infrastructure that we didn't have before."

Building out a holistic zero trust environment

As with any significant change to employee work processes, the transition to zero trust has faced hiccups. However, the Zscaler platform has helped Verisk resolve challenges. "Zscaler's tools have definitely helped us get over the humps," Negrete said.

Together, ZDX, ZIA, and ZPA are supplying Verisk with a holistic zero trust environment that can enable all of the company's approximately 9,000 employees to work securely whether in the office or remote.

"Rather than having multiple operationally inefficient appliances in our data centers using the obsolete castle-and-moat architecture, our Zscaler platform pushes security out to our endpoints and secures traffic to them," Negrete said. "This can give our users seamless and secure access to the tools they need no matter where they are or where their applications are published."

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– **Sophie Twu**
Director of Network Engineering
Verisk

Policy-based app access helps reduce business risk

The Zero Trust Exchange is also permitting Verisk to improve its security posture in other ways, such as customizing access based on which applications specific users require and which they do not.

“Previously, using VPNs, connecting to our data center gave employees broad access to all applications,” Negrete said. “With our Zscaler platform, we can use the principle of least privilege to narrow access to only the applications an employee needs for their role with the company, based on policies we set.”

Another platform advantage is the integration between Zscaler and AWS. “For instance, our developers no longer log into a VPN and then navigate to the gateway providing access to our AWS footprint,” Negrete said. “Instead, as trusted, authenticated users, they go directly to their destination and start working.”

Strong partnership in cloud transformation and beyond

Verisk also implemented **Advanced Cloud Sandbox** for AI-driven prevention of patient-zero attacks. Using real-time analysis, the solution inspects and quarantines suspicious files. Concurrently, quarantined traffic is blocked for every Zscaler user, preventing any instances of this never-before-seen threat from reaching other customers’ networks.

Looking ahead, Verisk plans to utilize ZDX in various ways to further speed issue resolution, proactively improve performance, and assist with refining experiences during DevOps processes.

For Verisk, its Zero Trust Exchange is an important ingredient for achieving the analytics firm’s all-cloud goals. “Like so many enterprise IT organizations today, we’re focused on delivering premier experiences that enable end users to work productively and securely from anywhere,” Negrete said.

“ZDX is helping us improve our business unit and end user relationships, enhance security, and reduce IT overhead,” he added. “And, overall, Zscaler is a strong strategic partner with a zero trust platform that can benefit our enterprise as a whole.”

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Upping its analytics game

Driven by a passion for using data and insights to make a difference—helping protect people, economies, society, and the planet—Verisk is a respected predictive analytics powerhouse. When it adopted a zero trust model, the company focused on improving end user experiences by leveraging AI-driven analyses that can help enable its distributed global workforce continue to address insurance underwriting and claims, fraud, regulatory compliance, natural resources, catastrophes, economic forecasting and geopolitical risks, as well as environmental, social, and governance (ESG) matters.

