

AvePoint Helps the City of Vincent Streamline Information Governance and Mitigate Security Risks to Balance Collaboration and Control



CITY OF VINCENT

Customer Location

Perth, Western Australia

Industry

Public Sector

Platform

Microsoft 365

Critical Needs

- Empower staff to safely increase usage of Microsoft 365
- Reduce risk of information sprawl and data exposure
- Ensure visibility of information created by staff
- Alignment with record-keeping requirements

Solution

- AvePoint Cloud Governance
- AvePoint Policies
- AvePoint Insights
- AvePoint Cloud Records

★ Success Highlights

- Automated three-step workspace approval process ensures management visibility, information classification, and security compliance
- Proper classification and data disposal streamline compliance requests
- Policy control of shared links mitigates the risk of unauthorized access
- User-friendly solution and automation reduces IT administration and overhead

🔍 Customer Profile

The City of Vincent is a local government area located in metropolitan Perth, Western Australia. It covers an area of approximately 10.4 square kilometers and encompasses a number of vibrant inner-city suburbs. As a local government authority, the City is responsible for a range of services, such as waste and recycling collection, community events and programs, and planning and development approvals, and infrastructure, including maintaining 139 km of roads and 104 ha of parks and gardens.

⚙️ The Challenge

When the City of Vincent adopted Microsoft 365 (M365) in 2019, they placed a significant emphasis on security. Peter Ferguson, Executive Manager of Information and Communication Technology for the City, recognized the potential security gaps and vulnerabilities that could arise from cloud-based solutions and put appropriate safeguards in place.

That's why, when the City wanted to increase its usage of M365 tools, it faced a challenge. They wanted to utilize SharePoint and Teams more extensively but were concerned about potential risks associated with granting users more freedom. They also knew that strict control could lead to users turning to shadow IT, so they needed to balance collaboration and control.

To address this challenge, the City needed a solution that provided a framework for staff to take full advantage of M365 tools while maintaining necessary security controls, information governance, and compliance with government regulations.

💡 The AvePoint Solution

The City of Vincent turned to AvePoint Cloud Governance, AvePoint Policies, and AvePoint Insights to meet its governance and security needs. These solutions provided

a framework for staff to take full advantage of M365 tools without compromising security.

With the implementation of Cloud Governance, staff could create their own workspaces while adhering to an automated three-step approval process that ensures management visibility, information classification, and security compliance. Additionally, Cloud Governance's automated lifecycle management feature confirms each workspace is still active every six months. If owners indicate that they were no longer necessary, the archiving and disposal process is initiated automatically.

"Automation means that it only takes a few clicks to manage our disposal process," says Peter. "Being a government organization with compliance requirements, we don't want to keep unnecessary data stores around. The automated archiving process ensures that's no longer a concern."

To comply with information governance policies, the City used AvePoint Insights and AvePoint Policies. Together, the solutions help the City enforce policies and maintain compliance while collaborating effectively with M365 tools.

For example, AvePoint Insights identified a concerning number of externally shared links with inappropriate security settings, prompting configuration of AvePoint Policies to enable safe link sharing; this included automatic policy violation fixes and link expiration. Peter's IT administrators have clear reporting and vision of shared links on a single screen and the added ability to unshare links when required. This has helped mitigate the risk of unauthorized access to sensitive information.

Peter notes that AvePoint solutions are user-friendly, stating that "For non-IT teams, AvePoint is a better place to manage Microsoft than Microsoft directly, which can be extremely complex." The ease of use led the City to finally take the leap to use SharePoint as a compliant record-keeping solution. Initially, Peter was hesitant because of the complexity of the Microsoft Admin Center but he became more confident in the record-keeping team's ability to manage it with AvePoint Cloud Records.

Using Cloud Records, the team could build their information management framework and automate it, reducing human error and allowing for less manual record-keeping. This streamlined the classification process and reduced the number of classifications from over 2,500 to a core of 70, ensuring easy accessibility and disposability while still maintaining compliance with regulations.

Peter highlights the City's efforts to mitigate data loss and exposure by reducing the amount of data they store, particularly sensitive information. He credits AvePoint solutions as crucial in this process: "Ultimately, AvePoint solutions are helping the City reduce its risk. With these solutions, we can assess and manage the information we store and dispose of what we don't need. By not storing unnecessary data, we remove the ability to compromise it."

The Bottom Line

The City of Vincent has successfully balanced collaboration and information governance with the help of AvePoint solutions. The powerful automation in each solution has future-proofed the City against changes in compliance requirements or increased data utilization, reducing risk and ensuring compliance.

"We don't need staff to have perfect behavior for record keeping, workspace creating, or information sharing; we just need to automate where possible and enable great staff outcomes," says Peter. "Staff are required to do less compliance, human error is reduced significantly, and, on the off chance anything drifts outside security guidelines, AvePoint detects and resets the security profile. It's huge."

Overall, AvePoint solutions have significantly improved the City's information management practices, empowering staff to work efficiently with Microsoft 365 tools and ensuring long-term security.

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- PETER FERGUSON

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