Centrify Securely Enables London Hydro's Move to the Cloud

London Hydro is a Local Distribution Company (LDC) that serves the city of London, Ontario, Canada. The utility delivers electricity to over 152,000 customers across the residential, institutional, commercial and industrial sectors.

The Challenge

Implement a cloud-based identity management solution as the basis for an entirely new cloud-based infrastructure. Include secure single sign-on (SSO) to support productivity-enhancing mobile apps. Do this in a way that reduces demand on IT.

As with any Local Distribution Company (LDC), the top priority at London Hydro is literally keeping the lights on. LDCs must therefore act with extreme caution when it comes to introducing new technologies into the system that could negatively impact service to customers. But that caution must be balanced with the many benefits new technologies provide, such as the ability to significantly reduce costs, improve delivery systems and minimize waste.

After months of careful evaluation of the advantages and the risks, Mike Flegel, Cyber Security Specialist at London Hydro, was tasked with finding a single sign-on platform that would support the company's move to a cloud-based infrastructure. "The nature of electrical production, transmission and distribution is going through a huge metamorphosis, at the center of which are transformational technologies," he says. "Our goal is to be a leader that demonstrates the way for other energy providers to securely adopt these new technologies."

Historically, security at LDCs has been a matter of simply keeping office and field networks physically separate, and requiring multiple passwords to access individual resources. But times have changed — complete separation can be too restrictive and users juggling multiple passwords can end up being security risks themselves.

London Hydro needed to implement an identity management solution that would be the basis for an entirely new cloud-based infrastructure consisting of everything from traditional ERP datacenter applications like SAP and JDE to new, mobile apps for the field. At the same time, it was important to reduce the IT workload by minimizing password reset requests, and simplifying the process of adding or removing employee access and incorporating new apps into the environment.

> "Centrify helped us to become Ontario's first electrical utility to adopt a cloud-first infrastructure."
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> **Mike Flegel, Cyber Security Specialist**
> **London Hydro**

The Solution

After evaluating several vendors featured in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for IDaaS, London Hydro chose Centrify because it offered the best method for applying consistent access control policies, and included MFA for an even more secure environment.

London Hydro was looking for an identity management solution that provided consistent application of access control policies, and single sign-on to ensure usability and rapid adoption by employees. After evaluating several vendors featured in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for IDaaS, Flegel selected Centrify Identity Service because it met all the functionality requirements, including multi-factor authentication (MFA) capabilities for an additional layer of security.

To be effective, MFA must be easy for users so that it increases rather than stifles productivity. "Getting employees out in the field to remember multiple passwords is a huge challenge," Flegel

> "Implementation of Centrify Identity Service was quick and easy. Now, it's a breeze to add new apps to the system and customize each employee's portal."

> "When we installed and evaluated the Centrify solution, it blew us away. It ticked off every single box we needed for a mobile device management (MDM) system."

Mike Flegel, Cyber Security Specialist
London Hydro

says. "With SSO, they can simply click on an icon to gain access to whatever resources they need. And with MFA, we can selectively add an additional layer of security to protect more sensitive applications. By providing both SSO and MFA, Centrify Identity Service solves many of our most challenging issues."

According to Flegel, 80% of the business case made for the Centrify solution revolved around security. "A few years ago, cybersecurity wasn't even a topic on the London Hydro Board of Directors' agenda. Now it's a primary focus. With Centrify, we've been able to respond to our executives' concerns — we no longer have to worry about password errors, strength, expiration, or even complaints about having too many of them. All of that makes us so much more secure."

The Results

London Hydro has achieved a secure, cloud-based infrastructure. There's been a reduction in service desk calls due to SSO, and workers are now able to access key mobile apps in the field. The entire infrastructure is being evaluated by other LDCs for replication.

Since its implementation, Centrify Identity Service™ has helped to improve worker productivity. "Not long ago, our field personnel were using pen and paper to write notes telling them where maintenance was required, such as which transformer needed repairs or which lines needed stringing. We've now issued everyone rugged laptops and they use mobile apps. This has resulted in efficiencies we hadn't even anticipated and has saved us both time and money."

IT has also experienced the benefits of the Centrify rollout. "We've noted a significant reduction in service desk calls, and that has freed up our IT team to focus on rolling out additional apps that further help get the job done faster and more efficiently. Most importantly, Centrify Identity Service really enabled us to move our base applications to the cloud. We found the product easy to use, intuitive, and easy to install."

Flegel and his team knew they would eventually need a mobile device management (MDM) system to complement the new infrastructure, but it wasn't originally part of business case for an identity management solution. Flegel says, "I hadn't anticipated doing MDM at the same time, and it wasn't in the RFP. But after installation, we explored the program and it blew us away. It ticked off every single box that we needed for a mobile device management system. It caught us totally by surprise."

Flegel stressed, "Our mission was to be a leading LDC adopter in technology, and already our entire infrastructure is being examined and evaluated by other LDCs. They want to leverage our investigation process and to mimic some of the interesting things we're doing."

When looking for a solution, Flegel recommends that LDCs "be very specific about their needs in order to find the right solution for their organizations. Centrify was right for us. The feature set, the ease-of-use and the value made it stand out. We were off and running on day one, and we've never looked back."

SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA	+1 (669) 444 5200
EMEA	+44 (0) 1344 317950
ASIA PACIFIC	+61 1300 795 789
BRAZIL	+55 11 3958 4876
LATIN AMERICA	+1 305 900 5354
EMAIL	sales@centrify.com
WEB	www.centrify.com