Securing Applications and Their Data

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About six months ago, I was contacted by a company with news of a fascinating new product. I’ve looked at this company’s Web site <http://www.liquidmachines.com/> and am very interested indeed in what they have to offer.

Liquid Machines is offering a mechanism for integrating strong security with any application program that you use in your organization, whether custom-built or COTS (commercial off-the-shelf) software. Quoting from a press release, the product offers

* Auto Integration with existing applications, directory and authentication mechanisms. Unlike other application-specific security solutions, this lets enterprises install Liquid Machines consistently and quickly, without any modifications or upgrades to existing applications, including custom applications.

* Trusted Security Agents that act like private security guards, traveling with data and documents to enforce policies. These trusted security agents remain with data regardless of where data goes, enforcing policies, and allowing or preventing common actions like reading, modifying, copying and printing information according to a user’s privileges.

* The Policy Droplet control that enables business users to intuitively assign security policies to data quickly and easily within popular desktop applications, such as Microsoft Office, Visio, Microsoft Project, Documentums eRoom, SolidWorks and Adobe Acrobat.

* Customized Logging and Reporting capabilities that help companies demonstrate compliance and satisfy auditing and reporting requirements.

According to the documentation on the Web site, the product allows users to create and share their company documents just as they ordinarily would – but these documents are restricted by access and usage control rules that can be defined by management centrally and managed inside and outside the enterprise, or assigned by the users themselves. Once documents have been created in the modified applications, they cannot be shared by versions of the software that have not been transformed by Liquid Machines. This design should greatly reduce one of the most pernicious problems in modern data management: data leakage. Unlike plain encryption tools or those based on a repository or container implementation, which generally cause resistance from users and have no access control features, the design of Liquid Machines could significantly improve overall security in the corporate sector.

The product is licensed for workgroup applications, starts at a base price of $50,000, and has a per-seat incremental pricing structure.

[Disclaimers: I have not tried this software; this is not an evaluation or an endorsement – it’s a statement of interest; I have no financial involvement whatsoever in the company and its products.]
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MSIA: 18-month online Master of Science in Information Assurance offered by Norwich University; see <http://www3.norwich.edu/msia> for full details.

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