

Grand Canyon Education's Winning Cloud Security Curriculum: Continuous Vulnerability Monitoring and Remediation



INDUSTRY

Education

HEADQUARTERS

Phoenix, Arizona USA

COMPANY SIZE

4,700 employees

OVERVIEW

Grand Canyon Education (GCE) is a shared services partner dedicated to serving colleges and universities. GCE's leadership team has been leading educational transformation since 1983, and supports partner institutions' students through operational functions that achieve organizational growth and student success. GCE can design programs that serve your diverse student body on campus or online at the undergraduate, master and doctoral program levels.

These functions support the complete student life cycle including strategic enrollment management, academic counseling, financial services, learning management system support, technical support, student information system support, compliance, marketing, human resources, classroom operations, curriculum development, faculty recruitment and training, among others.

OUR SOLUTION



CloudGuard Posture Management enabled us to understand our environment comprehensively, find vulnerabilities, and prioritize what was most vulnerable and the highest risk to us.

Michael Manrod, CISO, Grand Canyon Education



CHALLENGE

The more Grand Canyon Education increased its use and reliance on cloud computing, like many organizations, the more it began to find it challenging to monitor and secure these systems. As Michael Manrod, CISO at Grand Canyon Education, explained, that lack of visibility made it difficult for them to manage their system vulnerabilities effectively.

For instance, it was only when Grand Canyon Education hired external consultants to conduct assessments that they had a complete understanding of their environment, and even then, they had additional challenges prioritizing and remediating vulnerabilities. “When we had assessments conducted, they were snapshots and provided our status for only a point in time. We lacked the real-time feedback about what we needed to fix,” Manrod said.

“If there isn’t good prioritization, everything’s an emergency,” Manrod added. The challenges weren’t going to go away. The organization’s use of the cloud and the amount of software and applications they managed grew. Grand Canyon Education needed a way to gain visibility into their cloud environments and continuously secure the configurations and settings throughout their cloud systems. It also required an effective way to analyze their software code for security flaws.

Grand Canyon Education sought security tools to provide its security team visibility and insight into security flaws and the ability to prioritize and remediate them in its cloud systems and internally managed software. Any security tools they choose must also be straightforward to deploy and use without requiring extensive resources or consulting support. Because their cloud environments constantly evolve, they need continuous assessments, scalability, and adaptability.

SOLUTION

Check Point Software was the only security vendor that provided everything Grand Canyon Education required. Specifically, CloudGuard Cloud Native Application Protection Platform (CNAPP) leveraging its integrated modules: Cloud Security Posture Management (CSPM) and Code Security that together met all the requirements of Grand Canyon Education’s security team.



I would highly recommend Check Point if asked. The ease of Check Point implementation and the ample security findings it quickly provided make Check Point a slam dunk.

Cameron Kownack, IT Security Engineer, Grand Canyon Education



We struggled with the cloud evolution occurring slowly over time, starting with not having as much governance as we wish we had,” said Cameron Kownack, IT Security Engineer at the company. “We had big hopes that the Check Point CloudGuard solutions would enable us to understand our environment and prioritize what was most vulnerable and the highest risk. We could build that into a plan to improve and evolve our cloud security continuously,” Kownack said.

CloudGuard Posture Management provides organizations with that ability through automated security and compliance across cloud environments, advanced threat detection, customizable security policies and rules, comprehensive discovery and visualization of cloud assets and advanced auto-remediation capabilities.

Due to the rise in the amount of software running within their environment, Grand Canyon Education also needed to keep these applications secure. CloudGuard Code Security provides the organization with automated vulnerability detection, exposed credentials prevention, enhanced application security across its clouds, customizable rules, and straightforward integration into their development workflows, preventing risks from reaching cloud environments with scans and detectors running throughout the R&D toolchain, from developers’ machines to CI/CD pipelines.

“Code security is critical to us,” said Kownack. “We want secure cloud infrastructure to deliver services, but we also want to ensure the code running on that infrastructure is secure. Are there dependencies or libraries that are vulnerable? Are there other problems an adversary could exploit to compromise our Internet-facing cloud assets? Code Security enables us to find and correct those problems and helps us to achieve those goals,” he said.

OUTCOME

Both CloudGuard Posture Management and CloudGuard Code Security helped Grand Canyon Education’s security team achieve the goals they set out to achieve. “CloudGuard Posture Management enabled us to understand our environment comprehensively, find vulnerabilities, and prioritize what was most vulnerable and the highest risk to us,” Manrod said.

Further, CloudGuard Posture Management improved security manageability through the “single pane of glass” view into Grand Canyon Education’s entire cloud environment it provided. This enabled the team to see all the security findings, from misconfigurations to compliance and identity issues. Now, Manrod and Kownack could better prioritize the security issues based on the risk they create and the likelihood of their exploitation, thereby helping them to focus on the most critical problems first.

By consolidating all the cloud security information in one place, CloudGuard Posture Management also saved the team significant time compared to relying on external consultants and disparate tools. The automation and streamlined processes improved the overall visibility and efficiency of their cloud security management

With CloudGuard Code Security, Grand Canyon Education’s ability to secure its software improved dramatically and with surprising results. CloudGuard Code Security helped bring together different teams to collaborate better on security. “We get a group together every other week, including people from development, infrastructure, networking, and security. We look at the results, and we all work and plan together in ways to improve continuously and to identify issues and work solve those issues versus everyone working in a silo,” Manrod said.

This cross-team collaboration led to a measurable improvement in their cloud security posture. Overall, the CloudGuard Posture Management and CloudGuard Code Security provided Grand Canyon Education with the tools and capabilities necessary to gain improved control and visibility over its cloud security. This led to improved efficiency, collaboration, and security outcomes. “By working with Check Point, we gain deeper insight into our cloud, code base, and ecosystem. That fosters better planning and creates peace of mind,” Manrod said.

Overall, the team is thrilled with their decision to choose CloudGuard Posture Management and CloudGuard Code Security. “I would highly recommend Check Point if asked,” said Kownack. “The ease of Check Point implementation and the ample security findings it quickly provided make Check Point a slam dunk.”

ABOUT CHECK POINT

Check Point Software Technologies Ltd. (www.checkpoint.com) is a leading AI-powered, cloud-delivered cyber security platform provider protecting over 100,000 organizations worldwide. Check Point leverages the power of AI everywhere to enhance cyber security efficiency and accuracy through its Infinity Platform, with industry-leading catch rates enabling proactive threat anticipation and smarter, faster response times. The comprehensive platform includes cloud-delivered technologies consisting of Check Point Harmony to secure the workspace, Check Point CloudGuard to secure the cloud, Check Point Quantum to secure the network, and Check Point Infinity Core Services for collaborative security operations and services.

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