



## Varonis Systems Raises Bar for Data Asset Control, Management, and Protection

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### Management Summary

Insurance is something that I do not like very much. Yet I buy it anyway because it affords me some level of protection against life's potential disasters: death of a loved one (or myself), an automobile accident that was my fault (or the fault of another), healthcare expenses in one form or another, a fire or flood at my home, nursing home expenses (at least partially), loan payoff for my mortgage or other major asset, even ongoing income protection to cover what other insurance policies do not. At some level, I dislike insurance policies because they are associated with these negative life experiences. However, at another level, I continue to be uneasy that what I pay in premiums exceeds (and, perhaps, by a wide margin) the financial benefit I might receive as payment for my probabilistic claims.

Regardless, if you ask me about insurance just as I am in the midst of the disaster or as I am opening the envelope with the benefit check inside, I thank the day that I decided to sign up for it. First, I feel relief that some of my loss/expenses will be covered. Second, I actually can see some return on my premium investment. Third, and most importantly, I can reaffirm that insurance actually was a good idea. With it, I worry less and sleep better. With it, my assets are protected more than they would be otherwise. Information technology vendors, service providers, and users of all kinds, on the other hand, face a far different situation when they attempt to protect IT data assets.

IT delivery vendors, service providers, and internal IT organizations have more risks to mitigate and more overseers to satisfy. Unlike individuals who protect themselves with policies, claims, and potential benefit checks, these IT folks need to protect themselves with products designed to prevent untoward situations from arising in the first place. Or, if they do arise, they have the information available to satisfy the involved stakeholders (like regulators, the courts, customers, etc.). It is really a question of protecting the IT assets of the enterprise while simultaneously improving accountability and control should law enforcement, regulators, or adversaries question your enterprise's business practices or actions.

Varonis Systems does not sell financial insurance policies, but they do sell a data governance suite along with its underlying infrastructure that protects against missteps and provides information for IT decision making so that unwise acts and events do not occur in the first place. Varonis' tagline is *all about the data*, but you should consider this to be about protecting your enterprise. Please read on to learn how Varonis can control, manage, and protect your IT data assets by avoiding problems before they occur, and by facilitating and expediting resolution, when the need arises.

### Varonis: Who They Are/What They Do

Varonis Systems, Inc. was founded in 2005 and is headquartered in New York City, with primary research and development facilities in Israel. Varonis offers data governance software

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that satisfies this mantra: *Only the right people have access to the right data all the time.* Fulfilling this mission means that businesses, in general, and data owners and managers, in particular, have control over their IT in terms of data asset control, management, and protection. Varonis easily maps data ownership and provides tools and reports for data use management. Using Varonis' products ensures that the enterprise has visibility into, and control of, its unstructured and semi-structured data--the kinds of data that today are growing the fastest and, to date, have been subject to the least control and protection. Varonis products fill this uncovered or under-protected responsibility.

Varonis' built-in reporting structures graphically illustrate those files that are most sensitive and have widest uncontrolled access because of excessive or loose permissions. IT and business management can focus on and remediate these to their satisfaction, as required to meet the enterprise's policies and requirements, especially compliance reporting and auditing.

Audit trails showing who used what data are automatic, as this data is captured in real time (without excessive overhead). Varonis reports 100,000s of users served without discernable system degradation.

With the DataPrivilege capability described in the text box to the right, business users can perform entitlement reviews, automate authorization workflows, and effectively set up ethical walls all from an easy to use self-service portal.

Moving or copying data from one storage location to another with Varonis is exceptionally fast and easy to accomplish because permissions and access rights accompany the data as it is relocated, thereby precluding the necessity of having to do this time-consuming and exacting chore again on the new configuration.

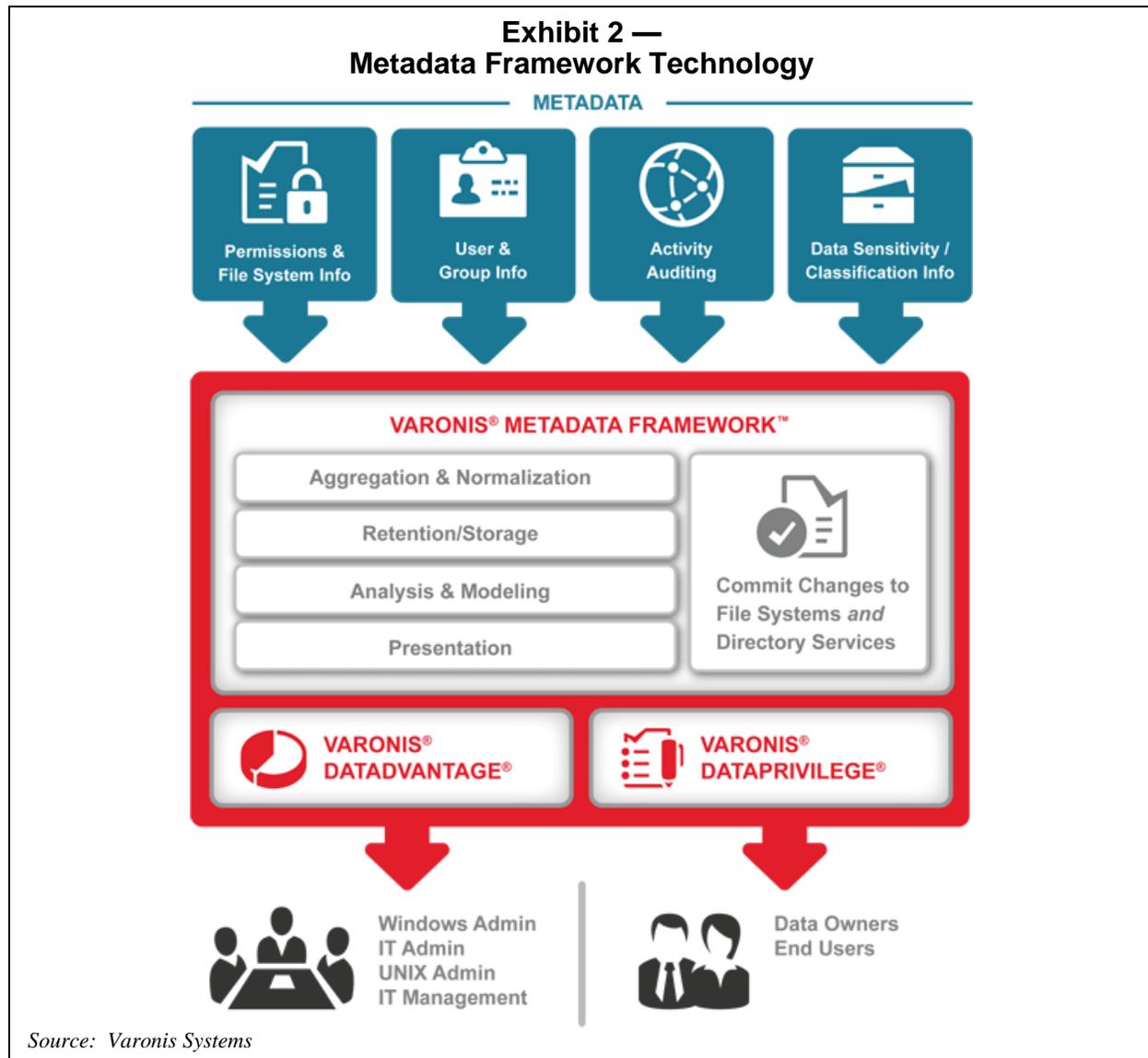
### **Who Cares the Most?**

IT delivery organizations (those who provide and support the enterprise IT infrastructure, whether internally or as part of an externally delivered service) clearly appreciate the need to understand who has access to which data. After all, they are responsible to the organization for safeguarding its operational data integrity, including enabling proper controls that ensure access rights are both proper and current (i.e., "not stale"). Data owners, such as business-unit and line managers, also need such visibility. While the data owner clearly might be concerned about who is using his/her data and for what purpose (and thus

### **Exhibit 1 — Varonis' Product Line Up**

- ***DataAdvantage:*** This is the centerpiece of Varonis' Data Governance Suite for Windows, UNIX/Linux, SharePoint, Exchange, and Directory Services. It finds and fixes problems of access control and can be a powerful tool for IT professionals tasked with insuring that only appropriate users have access to sensitive enterprise data.
- ***DataPrivilege:*** This lets data owners and business users decide who should have access to enterprise data. Its intuitive web-based interface masks IT complexities so that decisions are made on a "what is best for the business" basis.
- ***IDU Classification Framework:*** This is Varonis' content scanning engine that provides visibility into where sensitive data resides across file servers and SharePoint sites. Varonis combines data sensitivity with permissions metadata to reveal business' biggest risk: where critical data is *overexposed*.
- ***Data Transport Engine:*** This copies data and metadata while adhering to maintenance windows and other scheduling constraints, automatically synchronizing source and destination with incremental copies even if the source data is still in use, translating permissions across platforms and domains, and reporting on progress or completion. This feature facilitates online migrations that avoid business interruptions and handles the most onerous tasks of data migration efficiently. Manual processes are eliminated or substantially reduced.
- ***DatAnywhere:*** This is a dynamic, scalable data-routing infrastructure that facilitates https access and block-level synchronization with remote devices. DatAnywhere acts like a "personal lock box" within your own network, but on your own servers. Importantly, access is allowed from remote locations. With DatAnywhere, users can drag, drop, and synchronize safely with file shares stored behind the enterprise firewall.

*Source: Varonis Systems*



wants/needs to know), there are many stakeholders involved, all the way up to the boardroom. Ultimately, it is enterprise managers who hold the responsibilities for protecting enterprise assets, i.e., the board and CxOs. They own corporate oversight responsibilities and it is they who need what Varonis has to offer.

Think of it this way: Varonis offers a *big stick* to IT and general management decision-makers. Those who are responsible for oversight need the psychological threat that Big Brother is watching those who assign data usage rights. They also need a "physical trail threat" (of logging who is using what). Varonis supplies both.

### The Beauty of Metadata (or How It Is Done)

The Varonis "secret sauce" is really a combination of their metadata framework and mathe-

matics. Metadata is data that is descriptive of the real data and the containers into which that data is logically grouped. Metadata constructs can be manipulated and analyzed to reveal insights about the information with which it is associated. Mathematics is used to discover differences from "expected values" and to create normalization techniques during which extraneous values are eliminated. Deduplication techniques and the use of snapshot technology make this process efficient and speedy.

#### About the Varonis Metadata Framework

The metadata framework used by Varonis is proprietary and protected by patents. It is designed to provide ongoing, scalable data protection and management even in the face of ever-increasing volume and complexity. Specifically, Varonis has declared that four types of metadata are critical for data governance.

### Exhibit 3 — What's in Release 5.8?

Release 5.8 is now in expanded beta testing (for widespread real world exposures prior to formal release during 4Q2012). This following list of features from Version 5.8 falls into at least two overall announcement themes: *ease of use* (such as fewer mouse clicks, avoiding switching to other software, and ability to tailor site-specific tools and reports) and *saving money* (fewer software licenses for SQL, for example). However, these thematic trends transcend the announcement of a particular release. Instead, they are proof points of how products are designed at Varonis and the high value that Varonis assigns to listening to the wants and needs of their customers.

- **Incremental File Walk:** Ability to scan the file system for permissions changes incrementally rather than scanning the entire system, reducing system and network overhead, and boosting overall efficiency. This helps make data owners and IT administrators more effective in their roles.
- **Database Separation:** SQL is no longer required to be installed on the same hosts as other Varonis components. This feature improves configurability and increases architectural flexibility. This is an important total-cost-of-ownership (TCO) improvement.
- **Expanded Triggers:** Varonis software modules are engaged when any one, some, or all of the following events (or triggers) takes place.
  - recognition that certain data is stale,
  - a legal inquiry has been received by the enterprise,
  - an internal or external audit has uncovered a situation requiring further explanation or analysis,
  - an alert has been posted from various sources (email, malware protection software, etc.),
  - user-created business process combinations unique to the enterprise or business unit,
  - high-risk activities have taken place, or
  - recognition that data does not (or ought to) align or be associated with new or different users.
- **DataPrivilege Control Management Console:** Because Varonis is a software solution, management control can be hosted on any attached console and serve as a single pane of glass to observe, manage, control, and actively modify the configuration. One can use the features of the console to simply install and monitor the following functions.
  - Add or remove servers
  - Add or remove file shares
  - Add or remove files
  - Stand up new file servers
  - Change configuration details

Users can still employ command line technology to automate non-traditional tasks. Varonis considers innovative CLI features as a way to build out the Varonis ecosystem and as an important source of “next release” features.

- **PowerShell Script Support:** This feature is one of the hidden jewels of this release. Varonis understands that it cannot preemptively describe all of the uses or applications that its users will need to manage nor what processes should do. This feature allows user customization to program automation that is appropriate for a given enterprise or business unit. User scripting adds flexibility and expands applicability to more real world situations.
- **Collectors:** A new software component introduced for metadata collection no longer requires Microsoft SQL Server, resulting in better performance, easier deployment, and a lower TCO. Previous releases required that the user license one instance of SQL Server per probe, resulting in a software expense to Microsoft. The new approach dramatically lowers the number of instances of SQL Server and thus lowers software licensing costs. Users consider this a huge benefit resulting in better configurability and reduced costs
- **Data Growth as a Metric:** Varonis now observes which file servers and which folders have the highest growth. With this information users can:
  - Tier their data to the appropriate storage resource – be it lightning-fast cache or slow-speed near line storage devices.
  - Engage the Data Transport Engine using new or expanded automated rules.
  - Manually relocate data to the proper server or storage resource.
- **Creation of Active Directory Groups from within DatAdvantage:** This feature allows user and group creation and editing without the need to exit the DatAdvantage application and employ Active Directory. This ease-of-use feature means there is no longer a need to jump continuously to Active Directory.
- **Additional Auditing Access to the Operational Log:** This feature shows the access information that has been gathered. The log shows when objects have been opened, moved, deleted, or mailed. Because it is a log, it is searchable, storable, and auditable, much to the delight of internal and external overseers. Overall, the enterprise has improved accountability if it empowers users to search for operational log anomalies in their own domains.
- **Multiple Inheritances of Permissions:** Right click the mouse after floating over the container or file of interest and you can see all sources of its permissions including whether they were inherited and from where. For example, if a user were granted access while working on Project A and Project A is completed, but management now wants all Project A staff to focus on Project B, this is easy to accomplish but also easy to audit. As always, the goal is to align data with the “right” users. “Permission creep” becomes an insidious problem of the past now solved.

Source: Information provided by Varonis Systems

- **User and Group Information** – from Active Directory, LDAP, NIS, Share-Point, etc.
- **Permissions information** – knowing who can access what data in which containers.
- **Access Activity** – knowing which users *do* access what data, when, and what they have done with it.
- **Sensitive Content Indicators** – knowing which files contain items of sensitivity and importance, and where they reside.

The Varonis metadata framework non-intrusively collects this critical metadata, generates metadata where existing metadata is lacking (by using file system filters and content inspection technologies), pre-processes it, normalizes it, analyzes it, stores it, and presents it to IT administrators in an interactive, dynamic interface that can be web-enabled.

Once done, data owners are empowered to make informed authorization and permissions maintenance decisions through a web-based interface. Changes are executed automatically with no IT overhead or manual backend processes. Looking forward, Varonis Systems has a commitment to work efficiently “at scale”, even as the users’ data becomes more and more complex.

### Varonis Gets “It” (Where “It” Means Listening to Customers)

Prepping products for consumption by today’s savvy IT professionals is tough. After all, they want the latest features with the best functionality at the lowest possible price and they want it all *now*. However, the task is made substantially easier by simply listening to the product’s users. Here, listening means more than just hearing your users. It means probing to understand not only what they are saying, but also why they are saying it. The latest Varonis announcement exhibits corporate listening at its best. In Exhibit 3 on the previous page are the features found in Data Governance Release 5.8, followed by the reason(s) why users requested them.

### Conclusion

If you have ever been “process served” about data in your organization, who has seen what, who has access rights to what, and who authorized permissions in the first place, then you understand the need for a product like one of the Varonis Data Governance Suites. More importantly, even if you just *worry* that these questions may someday

be asked and that you do not now know how you will answer them, then you too need what Varonis Systems offers.

It is an IT fact of life that these kinds of questions will be asked today, tomorrow, or someday soon. It is better to be forewarned and forearmed for the inevitable. The good news is that Varonis serves many money-saving roles even before your audit committee or court appearance or your request to testify before Congress. You will be able to respond to those who are likely to ask the tough questions: regulators of all kinds, external auditors, internal auditors, C-Level executives, business executives, IT executives, IT implementers including support, human resources representatives, union representatives, lawyers, courts, users, customers, patients, and even stockholders or industry analysts.

If you have not done so, your organization should examine the solutions offered by Varonis before rather than after being challenged in a more public venue. Today would be a good time to start. Varonis products represent a good IT insurance policy while the company represents an excellent partner should your enterprise need additional guidance concerning best practices in your particular industry.



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