

Case Study



**Asana Group
protects and
encrypts healthcare
data with Thales
CipherTrust and IT
solution partner
HINT AG**

cpl.thalesgroup.com

THALES
Building a future we can all trust

Company Overview

Founded in 2002, the "Asana Gruppe AG" is the parent company of the two operating joint-stock companies of the Leuggern and Menziken hospitals. On July 1, 2004, Falkenstein Asana AG, the center for residential and nursing care for the elderly in Menziken, was also integrated into the Asana Group AG as an operating stock corporation and wholly owned subsidiary.

Challenges

Protecting and encrypting Aargau's healthcare data

The shortage of specialists and the rising healthcare costs are pressuring the hospitals in the canton of Aargau. On the one hand, the operating company, the Asana Group, must guarantee high-quality service and first-class healthcare for patients while maintaining the same income level. On the other hand, it must take advantage of the opportunities offered by digitalization to ensure more efficient processes and lean administration in the face of a constantly growing volume of data. These challenges must be solved for the 650 employees at the two hospitals in Menziken and Leuggern so that they can concentrate on their core value: patient care.

As part of its digitalization strategy, the Asana Group switched to a cloud-hosted collaboration solution in 2023. This move facilitates the exchange of information between colleagues who want to make appointments quickly and easily or obtain another opinion. The Group opted for Microsoft Office 365 hosted in Microsoft Azure. However, several compliance issues had to be dealt with when exchanging data via the cloud, with the Swiss "Datenschutzfolgeabschätzung" playing the biggest role. "We are and were still faced with the challenge that we have no way to classify our data. We simply don't know what data is going into the cloud; this is not possible for us. We therefore must expect that personal data will be uploaded to the cloud, which is why we have to conclude a Datenschutzfolgeabschätzung agreement with the canton of Aargau," explains Adrian Seiler, Head of IT at the Asana Group.

However, other than compliance, security played an important role. "Microsoft provides on-board tools for encrypting data in the cloud, but we don't have the key used for encryption in our hands. In case of doubt, we have no control over our data, and we don't know if Microsoft will provide the key for decryption on request," says Seiler, describing the security challenge.

The Asana Group is following a trend with this approach, as the canton of Zurich also requires its municipal administrations to use a dual-key encryption solution for Microsoft 365 in Microsoft Azure. "One key is held by Microsoft, the other by the municipality. The municipality retains complete control over its key," said Seiler.



Industry
Healthcare



Location
Leuggern, Switzerland



Website
asana.ch

Deployment

Thales CipherTrust Bring Your Own Key (BYOK) encryption and security for healthcare data

Instead of relying on Microsoft's encryption services, Seiler was keen to increase the security of the data, not least for compliance reasons as part of the Datenschutzfolgeabschätzung with the canton of Aargau. "After intensive consultations, we added a layer of security at the beginning of 2024. However, before I could start the project, it was important to get the management and the board of directors of Asana agreement," said Seiler. The project started in April and was completed in May without any delays."

The Thales CipherTrust Data Security Platform offers a wide portfolio of data security use cases for customers to protect their data. The CipherTrust Cloud Key Management (CCKM) connector enables customers to control the keys to encrypt data in the cloud. Microsoft Azure offers data-at-rest encryption and key management. However, data protection mandates require customers to store and manage their keys. Microsoft Azure's "Bring Your Own Key" (BYOK) services fulfill these requirements, enabling customer key control. Customer key control allows for the separation, creation, ownership and control, including revocation, of encryption keys.

Bring Your Own Key (BYOK) is a security model that allows organizations to use their own encryption keys to secure data stored in cloud services, giving them greater control over their data protection. CCKM enables the BYOK functionality for the Asana Group to maintain control over its cloud-stored data in Microsoft Azure. This robust architecture safeguards unstructured files and structured databases. "This ensures that even if data subject to data protection regulations ends up in the cloud, it remains fully under our control. All data is highly secure with BYOK encryption and ready to migrate to quantum-safe encryption when available. Many people are unaware that traditional encryption solutions are not ready for the quantum era," said Seiler.

Results

Seamless Microsoft 365 performance while accessing data in the Microsoft Azure

The company is particularly pleased that the encryption via the Thales solution did not lead to any performance disruptions in accessing data in the Microsoft apps. After deploying the Thales CipherTrust solution, users experience seamless performance with no noticeable difference, continuing their work with applications and data through Microsoft 365 as usual. Collaboration over Microsoft 365 plays a crucial role in enabling and accelerating project work, significantly enhancing teamwork in the digital space without compromising efficiency or speed.

The Microsoft 365 collaboration solution allows Asana employees to work together more efficiently in administration and the hospitals. With the BYOK approach, the Thales CipherTrust solution helped Asana comply with data protection regulations and protect data against third-party access with BYOK encryption. "The collaboration with HINT AG and Thales was seamless. The project was successful and went as planned," said Seiler.

About Thales

The people you rely on to protect your privacy rely on Thales to protect their data. When it comes to data security, organizations are faced with an increasing number of decisive moments. Whether the moment is building an encryption strategy, moving to the cloud, or meeting compliance mandates, you can rely on Thales to secure your digital transformation. Decisive technology for decisive moments.

" All data is highly secure with BYOK encryption and ready to migrate to quantum-safe encryption when available."

– Adrian Seiler, Head of IT at the Asana Group