

# Meritrust Credit Union Puts ForeScout CounterACT to Work for Real-Time Visibility, Control and Protection From Rogue Network Devices

## Objective

Meritrust Credit Union needed a seamless way to control its network that was agentless, would enable multiple steps of remediation without any user downtime and prevent the possibility of rogue devices connecting to its network.

## Solution

The credit union deployed CounterACT to secure and manage its physical network layer via agentless monitoring and management of nearly 2,000 devices across 15 locations in Kansas.

## Results

- » Deployment ease due to agentless approach and integration with multi-vendor switch infrastructure
- » A holistic view of the network with real-time visibility of all end points
- » Provides the IT team full control of the physical network along with layers of remediation
- » Automates compliance enforcement while allowing one-click access to reports for auditors
- » Cost-savings, as the move from manual monitoring to automatic monitoring and remediation via CounterACT saves hundreds of man-hours a year
- » The ability to seamlessly monitor any public-facing systems such as lobby devices and kiosks for endpoint compliance

## Customer Overview

Chartered in 1935 to serve the aircraft industry, Meritrust Credit Union has grown in its scope and now includes 15 locations, branches and corporate offices in Kansas. Today, the credit union utilizes advanced technology to deliver a comprehensive array of offerings tailored to meet the needs of its members, while striving to provide friendly, best-in-class banking services.

The Meritrust IT team's goal was to bring additional network security to its headquarters and all branch locations in order to gain visibility and protect itself from the possibility of rogue devices. The credit union was also keen to find a solution that would give them one dynamic view of the entire 15-location network, to allow their policies to be implemented and to provide the ability to remediate unapproved devices or those that deviated from policy.



As the IT team scoped out the requirements, they knew they wanted an agentless solution to avoid the cost and effort of having to manage thousands of agents on Meritrust's nearly 2,000 devices. They also needed a solution compatible with switches and other infrastructure components from different manufacturers. The team looked at a Cisco solution, but dismissed it since it required agents to be installed on all managed endpoints and required a more uniform switch environment. They soon narrowed the search to ForeScout CounterACT™ because of its agentless approach and ability to work in a heterogeneous multi-vendor switch environment.

## Why ForeScout?

The most important reason Meritrust chose ForeScout CounterACT was its flexible and agentless approach to policy control. Explaining this advantage, Brian Meyer, information security officer at Meritrust Credit Union stated, "In a banking environment, there are a lot of thin clients such as teller machines and embedded devices. With these systems any extra overhead, such as installing an agent, could adversely impact performance and slow our ability to service customers. Additionally, we wanted to avoid the management nightmare of installing and maintaining an agent on each device."

Other factors in the choice of CounterACT included its support for cross-vendor switch integration, ease of installation and its "listen only" mode, a passive testing feature that made the deployment process as simple and unobtrusive as un-checking a box when all the policies were correctly configured and validated.

“CounterACT delivered value from day one. As soon as it came online we saw our 2,000 endpoints light up on the screen.”

**Brian Meyer, Information Security Officer, Meritrust Credit Union**

## How ForeScout Helped

### Visibility

ForeScout CounterACT provided value to Meritrust from day one. “As soon as we turned the system on we were stunned to see how many devices we actually had on the network. It’s not that we didn’t know we had a lot of devices; it was the capability of seeing them all in detail on one pane of glass. We were able to move from ‘we think we have 2,000 devices’ to ‘we know we have 2,000 devices and they meet our requirements to be on the network.’ It brought new perspective as we could easily see how many devices were on each segment. It allowed us to more easily categorize and apply policies to all these devices. And we could readily track assets, see possible issues and address potential policy violations by securing the physical layer at every location. That was huge for us,” commented Meyer.

### Management

Once all endpoints were visible, the next challenge was to identify all the devices to make sure they were valid and approved. What the team found was a fair amount of older equipment housed in relatively inconspicuous places that were not accurately tracked. Now with ForeScout CounterACT, the team knows exactly where and which devices are on the network, and they have peace of mind knowing that all devices are properly managed.

Furthermore, the IT team is now able to manage everything in real time. If a new device attaches to the network, it is first classified, blocked and then reassigned to a quarantined area. Next, based on predefined policies, the system quickly determines the device’s security posture and checks whether the device is allowed on the guest or the production network. Not only does this help keep the credit union’s networks secure, it also saves many man-hours since the process is now automated.

### Monitoring

CounterACT is used for threat protection because malware attacks can be mitigated by using the system’s built-in behavior-based intrusion monitoring capability. Additionally, any public-facing systems such as lobby devices and kiosks are closely monitored for endpoint compliance; any deviation from the desired configuration state is flagged for an immediate response.

### Compliance

CounterACT helps Meritrust ensure endpoint systems are compliant with security policies. CounterACT automatically discovers corporate-owned endpoints that do not have the required AV security software, or that have out-of-date versions of security software installed. CounterACT provides this intelligence to the centrally managed AV engine and can proceed to install and/or update the AV software on these hosts in order to regain compliance. Before deploying CounterACT, the Meritrust team would spend a full day tracking down this type of information in preparation for an audit, which in a lot of cases would not even discover all the devices that lacked AV software. Today, the Meritrust team can automatically enforce endpoint security policy and simply click a few buttons to run a compliance report. The report is then ready for auditors as soon as they arrive.

### Faster Service from the Help Desk

The Help Desk uses the CounterACT web portal to determine basic device location and configuration information to facilitate service tickets and expedite troubleshooting calls. This information helps the technicians quickly resolve issues, resulting in improved customer satisfaction. Other time savers include eliminating the need to go into a switch closet to see which devices are plugged in and the added task of chasing down device owners. The Help Desk team can now find systems even when the caller provides only partial information. The staff readily sees any device and issue from the CounterACT management screen.

“CounterACT delivered value from day one. As soon as it came online we saw our 2,000 endpoints light up on the screen. From there, it only got better as we automated the management of these endpoints and created reports and audit trails generated at the click of a button. Overall we’ve saved hundreds of man-hours since deploying CounterACT,” stated Meyer.

## Next Steps

Meritrust plans to utilize other policy templates and plug-ins including the Data Exchange Module. With this module, CounterACT sends data to and receives data from the credit union’s eGRC platform. In addition, they plan to utilize CounterACT’s plug-ins for Qualys to further automate vulnerability assessment controls. The additions will support numerous compliance tasks including PCI-DSS.”

## About ForeScout

ForeScout enables organizations to accelerate productivity and connectivity by allowing users to access corporate network resources where, how and when needed without compromising security. ForeScout’s real-time network security platform for access control, mobile security, endpoint compliance and threat prevention empower IT agility while preempting risks and eliminating remediation costs. Because the ForeScout CounterACT solution is easy to deploy, unobtrusive, intelligent and scalable, it has been chosen by more than 1,400 of the world’s most secure enterprises and military installations for global deployments spanning 37 countries. Headquartered in Cupertino, California, ForeScout delivers its solutions through its network of authorized partners worldwide. Learn more at [www.forescout.com](http://www.forescout.com).