San Marcos USD

Securing Education with Hirsch's uTrust FIDO2 Security Keys

SAN MARCOS
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
ENGAGING STUDENTS... INSPIRING FUTURES

"Hirsch's uTrust FIDO2 Security Keys have been pivotal in enhancing our cybersecurity while supporting our mission to use technology responsibly. They're secure, user-friendly, and budget-friendly."

Tony Cabral

Coordinator of Technology Operations, SMUSD

INDUSTRY
Education

END USER
San Marcos Unified School District (SMUSD)

DEALER
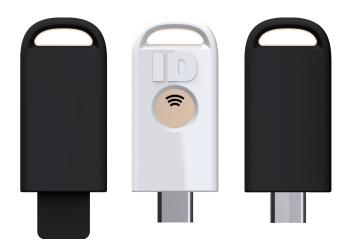Identify Systems

PROJECT TYPE
Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) Implementation

SCOPE
Deployment of Hirsch's uTrust FIDO2 Security Keys for 2,500 employees across multiple school sites to enhance cybersecurity and meet insurance requirements.

HIRSCH SOLUTIONS
uTrust FIDO2 Security Key

THE CHALLENGE

San Marcos USD needed robust cybersecurity to combat rising threats and comply with stringent insurance mandates, without relying on personal devices for authentication.

THE SOLUTION

SMUSD partnered with Hirsch and Identify Systems to deploy uTrust FIDO2 Security Keys, providing secure, user-friendly MFA across its workforce.

THE NEXT STEPS

SMUSD plans to monitor key performance and explore further cybersecurity enhancements with Hirsch's solutions.

Business Situation

San Marcos Unified School District, a leading K-12 institution in California, serves thousands of students and 2,500 staff across multiple campuses. Facing escalating cyber threats—ransomware, phishing, and data breaches—the district needed to strengthen its security posture to protect sensitive student and staff data. Updated insurance requirements mandated multi-factor authentication (MFA), but staff reluctance to use personal devices for authentication posed a challenge. SMUSD sought a cost-effective, compliant, and user-friendly solution to secure its digital infrastructure while aligning with tight educational budgets.

Technical Situation

SMUSD's existing authentication relied on passwords, leaving systems vulnerable to cyber threats. The district considered mobile-based MFA but faced pushback from employees unwilling to use personal devices. Key challenges included:

- **Cybersecurity Risks:** Rising phishing and ransomware attacks threatened data security.

- **Compliance Needs:** Insurance mandates required NIST-compliant MFA.

- **User Adoption:** Solutions needed to be intuitive to ensure staff compliance.

- **Budget Constraints:** High-cost or licensed solutions were unsustainable.

Identify Systems recommended Hirsch's uTrust FIDO2 Security Keys for a hardware-based, cost-effective MFA solution.

Solution

Hirsch delivered a tailored MFA solution, deploying uTrust FIDO2 Security Keys across SMUSD's 2,500 employees. Key features included:

- **uTrust FIDO2 Security Keys:** Provided phishing-resistant, authentication without personal device reliance.

- **Flexible Enrollment:** Offered three options via ClassLink SSO, SMS, or keys, with clear instructions and a help desk for support.

- **Seamless Deployment:** Keys were distributed to all school sites, with a mandatory enrollment deadline ensuring adoption.

Hirsch's support team and Identify Systems ensured smooth implementation, minimizing disruption and maximizing security.

Conclusion

San Marcos USD transformed its cybersecurity with Hirsch's uTrust FIDO2 Security Keys, achieving:

- **Enhanced Security:** Phishing-resistant MFA protected data against cyber threats.

- **Compliance:** Met NIST 800-63 and insurance requirements.

- **User-Friendly Adoption:** Hardware keys simplified logins, boosting staff uptake.

- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Avoided costly licenses, fitting tight budgets.

SMUSD's success sets a model for schools, with plans to evaluate performance and expand cybersecurity with Hirsch.