

How a Utility Company Transformed Its Third-Party SaaS Security

**Industry:**

Energy

Size:

600 employees

Headquarters:

Outside US

Primary Challenges

- Blind spots in SaaS usage
- TPRM wasn't comprehensive
- Difficulty assessing breach impact

Grip Impact

- Increased TPRM assessments by 67%
- Streamlined risk reviews
- Accelerated breach response

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When you think of a utility company, electricity is likely the first thing that comes to mind, not hundreds of SaaS applications quietly driving operations behind the scenes. For this leading energy distributor, the digital landscape was as vast and dynamic as the power grid it oversees. But with over 700 SaaS applications used across the organization, ensuring app security posed a growing challenge.

“Visibility was challenging,” shared a cybersecurity team leader focused on operational technology security and risk communication. “We had tools like Azure AD and Microsoft to monitor SaaS usage, but they only scratched the surface,” he explained. “Trial apps, smaller tools—we just didn’t know what was being used or by whom.”

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As customers depend on this utility company for consistent service, mitigating the possibility of high-impact breaches and service disruptions was a priority for the security team. While the security team was diligent with their third-party risk reviews, they felt the process was incomplete and weren’t adequately controlling the risks of their growing SaaS ecosystem. “We realized we weren’t capturing the full picture,” they shared. “Some business units had mature processes and would report the apps they were using.

But others were not as diligent, and we knew we were overlooking a large number of third-party SaaS apps entirely.” The gaps weren’t just inconvenient; they represented security and operational risks. Thus, they began searching for a solution to their challenges.

TPRM + Grip = A Winning Combination

This utility needed more than a traditional TPRM platform. Existing tools could consolidate data and initiate vendor assessments, but they lacked the ability to uncover shadow IT and contextualize the scale of SaaS usage within the organization. A single question loomed amongst the team: What don't we know?

Their search for answers took them to RSA, the global cybersecurity conference. It was there that this security team discovered Grip Security. "Grip showed us what we'd been missing," they recalled. "Grip's ability to present information clearly and quickly, without digging through endless reports, was a game-changer."

Grip's approach stood out for its simplicity and focus on actionable insights. Unlike other tools that merely aggregated data or relied on firewall logs, Grip delivered comprehensive insights, shedding light on unknown applications, trial accounts, and usage patterns. "We were surprised by the sheer volume of SaaS applications we weren't seeing," the team leader admitted. "It's easier to sign up for SaaS than it is to track activity, but Grip helped us change that dynamic."

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A New Era of SaaS Security

Since adopting Grip, this energy company has dramatically improved its TPRM processes and SaaS security reviews. In the first 18 months after onboarding Grip, the team assessed around 150 suppliers, two-thirds of which were identified post-Grip implementation. "We now have established criteria for who gets assessed," they noted, "and our CISO can answer the hard questions with confidence, backed by better intel."

Grip also proved invaluable during third-party breaches. When SaaS suppliers were compromised, the team could quickly assess the impact within their environment, pinpointing affected accounts and understanding the scale of the problem. "Grip has reduced uncertainty and stress during critical moments. It gives us a starting point, which is half the battle."

Beyond Visibility: Building the Future with Grip

The benefits of Grip extend beyond operational efficiency. The security team now leverages Grip's generative AI risks dashboard to monitor evolving risks and trends over time. Grip's integration capabilities have also positioned it as a cornerstone in the company's broader risk management strategy.

Looking ahead, this organization plans to deepen its use of Grip as a data engine and single source of truth for other tools, identifying smaller, lesser-known applications that might otherwise slip through the cracks. "Grip has become an initiation point for us. It highlights risks we didn't know existed and helps us make smarter decisions."

A Word to the Wise

The security team offers this advice for organizations struggling with SaaS sprawl and third-party risk: "You don't know what you're not seeing. Existing tools only go so far, and Grip fills in the gaps." This organization's journey from uncertainty to control is proof that even the most complex SaaS environments can be tamed with the right tools and a commitment to visibility.

Grip Security didn't just solve a problem; it redefined the organization's approach to SaaS and third-party risk management. Now, with greater clarity and confidence, the team can focus on what truly matters: delivering reliable, safe energy to their customers.