



# Albany County Secures Confidential Data with CounterACT

“ As a key component of our IT Security System, ForeScout CounterACT gives us up-to-the-minute visibility and control over everything on our network. That helps us protect our classified information from being breached. You can only control what you see, and with CounterACT ... we see everything. ”

**Perry Blanchard**  
Network Security Engineer  
Albany County

Albany County's government office stores a wide variety of classified data on its network. Securing this data is challenging because the government network is linked to other public and private networks. The network is always open to attack.

To solve the security challenge, Albany County wanted to monitor every device connecting to their network and allow only authorized users to access the confidential data.

According to Perry Blanchard, network security engineer at Albany County:  
“We maintain a highly dynamic network. Literally hundreds of users and devices log in and out each hour. We're tasked with making sure nothing – or no one – disrupts our service or steals classified data. This is a huge challenge. Hackers are always looking for ways to access our data, and they use all kinds of subterfuge and masquerading techniques to fool us. We needed a 'network inspector' that could not be fooled.”

## Why ForeScout?

Blanchard and his colleagues looked at many NAC solutions on the market – including those from Cisco and Symantec – before turning to ForeScout CounterACT. What they required was a comprehensive NAC solution that was relatively easy and inexpensive to install, and provided complete visibility and control of their network.

Said Blanchard:

“We went through a year-long evaluation process before settling on ForeScout. CounterACT was the easiest to install and did not force any costly switch replacements. It gave us far more capability at less expense than Cisco NAC, which required extensive scripting to glue together their myriad of NAC modules and servers. Plus, the other products relied on DHCP, which presents security holes we want to avoid.”

But most important to Blanchard was this:

“We needed a NAC solution that would detect and remediate any non-compliant users and devices in real time. ForeScout CounterACT answered all our needs.”

## How ForeScout Helped

### » Instant network visibility:

“With ForeScout CounterACT, we gain instant visibility into everything on our network. An hour after we plugged CounterACT into our network, we discovered smartphones, unauthorized printers, and two wireless laptops coming in over a rogue router that were hidden to us previously. Now I have peace of mind knowing that nothing can sneak on the network: we've closed all the back doors.”

### » Real time network control:

“With ForeScout CounterACT, we can give authorized devices and users immediate access to the information they require. We can also weed out unauthorized users and devices. This helps us learn of new users and devices that should be granted public or classified access in the future. It also helps us identify, block and blacklist persistent abusers/hackers by log-in identity and IP address.”

### » Secures classified data:

“Some departments require access to more highly classified data, and therefore have more stringent security policies against instant messaging. ForeScout CounterACT lets me enforce these policies. I can set the policy to detect and kill all IM applications on any given subnet, and I sleep better at night knowing CounterACT will get it done.”

### » Security software watchdog:

“ForeScout CounterACT acts as a watchdog over our BigFix, Sophos and other endpoint protection solutions ... making sure they are always on, always up-to-date, always delivering the value that we paid for. Without CounterACT, we could easily have problems on five percent of our systems and not even know it.”

## The ForeScout Difference

Blanchard closed by saying that CounterACT has gained a reputation at Albany County as 'the network visibility and control supertool'.

“CounterACT is the most powerful network solution I've seen for gaining visibility and control over anything attempting a connection. And its policy creation-and-enforcement engine makes CounterACT the most flexible NAC tool on the market. We use CounterACT every day to catch, correct and bring into compliance anything that's on – or attempts to enter – our network. It's our first and last line of defense, and the one tool we lean on to make sure all other tools are working as promised.”