



# Using Big Data to Create Actionable Insights

## - AWS and Alert Logic

## About Retail Insights, LLC:

Retail Insights, LLC exists to turn the overwhelming volume of sales analytics data generated by independent pharmaceutical organizations into actionable insights. Collecting information from its network of thousands of suppliers, wholesalers and operators across the U.S., Retail Insights analyzes sales data to provide subscribers with the intelligence needed to elevate business performance. Clients range from retailers and distributors such as Cardinal Health and AmerisourceBergen to global manufacturers including Proctor and Gamble, Johnson & Johnson, 3M, and Pfizer.

## About AWS:

For 10 years, Amazon Web Services has been the world's most comprehensive and broadly adopted cloud service. AWS offers over 70 full-featured services for compute, storage, databases, analytics, mobile, Internet of Things (IoT) and enterprise applications from 35 Availability Zones (AZs) across 13 geographic regions in the U.S., Australia, Brazil, China, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Singapore, and India. AWS services are trusted by more than a million active customers around the world – including the fastest growing startups, largest enterprises, and leading government agencies – to power their infrastructure, make them more agile, and lower costs.

## The Challenge

Retail Insights, LLC operates a subscription-based service to provide clients with access to the trends, patterns, and inherent intelligence embedded in data from the almost immeasurable torrent of individual transactions taking place everywhere in the country, every second of the day. The company's operational model involves the manipulation and synthesis of vast amounts of data. Viability of the whole business relies on ensuring the integrity of all data that is being handled; making it imperative to clearly demonstrate to stakeholders that everything possible is being done to protect the information. Choosing AWS as their cloud service was a crucial step in showing stakeholders their deep commitment to data security.

The original development team for Retail Insights, LLC's core application was sourced from reputable external partners but it became apparent that an industry-recognized solution was needed to guarantee that the company was consistently achieving the highest standards of data integrity and security.

At the same time, Retail Insights, LLC was beginning to gain significant traction in the pharmaceutical sector; attracting several manufacturers, pharmacies, and wholesale organizations. Although not mandated to do so, the benefits of becoming Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliant became increasingly apparent. Orion Newman, Vice President of IT, elaborated, "We don't actually handle protected health information but we witnessed an increasing number of opportunities where showing that we conform to the appropriate requirements would be a key differentiator for us." Because AWS cloud services are already HIPAA-compliant, Retail Insights was well on the path to making this important inroad into this lucrative retail sector.

## Why Alert Logic?

Newman began his search for security solutions on AWS Marketplace, looking at a variety of vulnerability scanning products and services. He soon realized that something a lot more advanced was needed in order to achieve the required levels of functionality and performance.

Products from some well-known but very conventional vendors were investigated but their whole approach to security was found to be geared towards on-site data centers and Active Directory environments, which isn't aligned with how Retail Insights, LLC conducts business. Newman's negative perceptions were further reinforced when he found it was always challenging to connect with a knowledgeable person and frequently got passed to multiple people before receiving an answer.

Further research consistently lead back to Alert Logic and the company's managed cloud security and vulnerability solutions. "The Alert Logic portfolio really sold me – it includes all of the elements that are relevant to Retail Insights, LLC – and demonstrated how each solution addressed our specific needs; I didn't see anything else like it. Vendors talked about cloud coverage but they didn't have anything near the breadth or depth of the Alert Logic suite."

Retail Insights, LLC made the decision to implement the combination of Alert Logic® Cloud Insight™ and Alert Logic® Cloud Defender™ to identify potential instances running and monitor breach attempts. Newman stated, "Alert Logic Cloud Insight provides an ongoing discovery of vulnerabilities in our AWS environment and Alert Logic Cloud Defender ensures our remediation efforts are precisely focused on what's needed to keep our AWS assets protected."

"I loved that all the products I needed came from one vendor: No one else had the comprehensive coverage – definitely a one stop shop. I don't have the time to pursue the learning curve associated with getting familiar with multiple interfaces – with Alert Logic I get it all in one portal. It makes everything pretty easy!"

## The Results

Because Alert Logic® solutions are designed from the outset to operate in a cloud-based infrastructure, implementation was very straightforward in Retail Insights, LLC's AWS environment and the functionality delivered immediate benefits. Cloud Insight flagged that one of the ports used for remote access was open and Cloud Defender quantified the magnitude of risk by showing that there were 10-15,000 daily attempts to find a valid username and password combination.

The way in which the port was configured made it secure but the sheer quantity of breach attempts was still a revelation. Utilizing the Alert Logic® information facilitated the implementation of a series of security enhancements in AWS that successfully removed the vulnerability. Application of the changes resulted in the number of attempts dropping instantly from 15,000 a day to around 120.

Cloud Insight has been very valuable in evaluating the overall effectiveness of the company's security posture. Newman and his team are able to quickly quantify the overall readiness of their environment and have accurate, timely insight into patch levels and software versions. He also is able to take a more informed stance when interacting with the development team to ensure that security considerations are always appropriately prioritized.

In addition to the security-related benefits there also have been compelling business advantages derived from the investment in the Alert Logic solutions: Newman confirmed, "I considered hiring a well-credentialed security specialist but I get a much better 'bang for the buck' from Alert Logic, and also spend a lot less money."

Deployment of the Alert Logic® solutions is enabling Retail Insights, LLC to conform to the mandates of HIPAA compliance and this has had a measurable impact on new business opportunities in the healthcare and pharmaceutical sector.

Newman concluded, "We like to highlight our partnership with Alert Logic as a tangible demonstration of Retail Insights, LLC's commitment to ensuring data integrity and how we're using cutting-edge technologies to prove that we're doing everything we possibly can to secure our data."

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