



Case Study:

Trust Waikato's Holistic Approach to Grantmaking Security with Fluxx



OVERVIEW

As cybersecurity threats escalate worldwide, grantmakers must adapt their technology and practices to protect sensitive data—without compromising accessibility or trust. Trust Waikato, a perpetual community trust based in New Zealand, demonstrates how a small, community-driven team can implement best-in-class security practices with thoughtful planning, clear communication, and the right partners. At the heart of their strategy: a successful rollout of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) through Fluxx, alongside broader efforts to streamline identity management and foster accountability in digital grantmaking.



Lessons for the Sector:

- Time your rollout wisely—choose a quiet season to avoid disrupting grantees.
- Train internal teams using the same materials as grantees—empathy starts with shared experience.
- Leverage existing tools and community knowledge—don't reinvent the wheel.

Organization Profile

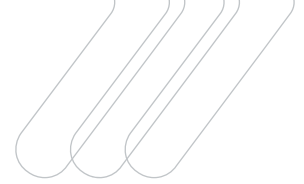
- **Name:** Trust Waikato
- **Region:** Waikato, New Zealand
- **Founded:** 1993 (via Act of Parliament)
- **Vision:** To support a vibrant and resilient community across the Waikato region
- **Annual Funding:** ~\$15.9 million NZD (2023)
- **Grants per Year:** ~492
- **Grantees Served:** ~1,900 active organizations

The Security Imperative

In 2021, a wave of cyberattacks across New Zealand elevated public awareness around data protection. For Trust Waikato, managing records for over 4,000 users—including grantee banking and contact information—this moment catalyzed a shift toward formalizing their security posture.

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IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY: SECURE, SCALABLE, THOUGHTFUL

Recognizing that security must enhance—not hinder—access, Trust Waikato pursued a strategic rollout of MFA that respected grantee needs and internal capacity:

Key Best Practices:

- **Seasonal Timing:** Introduced MFA in December, their quietest system period, to minimize disruption and provide ample onboarding time ahead of their February grant round.
- **Internal Readiness First:** Staff were trained using the exact same communications prepared for grantees, ensuring empathy and consistency in support.
- **User-Centered Communications:** Short videos, bullet-point instructions, and targeted emails helped users across technical levels adopt MFA confidently.
- **Data-Led Support:** Real-time registration tracking enabled proactive outreach to users who hadn't yet set up MFA, especially those applying in upcoming rounds.
- **Tool Reuse:** Instead of reinventing materials, they modeled their communications after leading Kiwi software brand Xero's MFA resources—saving time and building credibility.



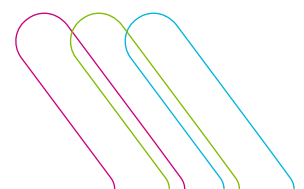
“WE ALWAYS TRY TO BE AWARE OF BARRIERS TO ENTRY. VISUAL CONTENT, SHORT GUIDES, AND PROACTIVE OUTREACH MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE,” NITA SHARED.

BEYOND MFA: MANAGING IDENTITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

The implementation also uncovered a deeper challenge: verifying who was actually completing grant applications. Trust Waikato operates on a high-trust model, and their application form includes legal declarations that must be signed by authorized personnel.

MFA gave them clarity.

“We hadn't realized how many people were using someone else's login. MFA helped ensure the person signing the form was who they said they were,” said Nita.





IMPACT & OUTCOMES

Stronger User Authentication

Fluxx MFA implementation gave Trust Waikato and its community peace of mind, ensuring only authorized users access and submit sensitive information.

Improved Identity Hygiene

They reduced their user base from over 4,000 to 1,900 verified, active grantees and cleaned up outdated accounts and improved database integrity.

Elevated Trust in the System

Grantees appreciated the change. In fact, many found MFA easier than dealing with annual password expirations. "They (users) actually prefer MFA," Nita said. "It's more convenient and more secure."

Efficient Internal Support

While initial support requests spiked, staff quickly adapted. After two months, support needs dropped significantly; thanks to shared ownership, smart training, and helpful reporting tools.

CONCLUSION



Trust Waikato's journey is more than an MFA success story, it's a model of how community funders can lead with both security and compassion. Their thoughtful rollout has enhanced data protection, reduced identity risk, and empowered staff and grantees alike. By weaving thoughtful implementation, human-centered design, and proactive data monitoring into their security practices, they've built a foundation of trust and confidence—for themselves and the communities they serve.

Security isn't just a feature—it's a responsibility. And with partners like Fluxx, Trust Waikato is showing how to do it right.





ABOUT FLUXX

Fluxx is the industry-leading cloud-first grantmaking solution. Purpose-built by grantmakers for grantmaking, Fluxx is women-led, values driven, and a Pledge 1% member organization. More than 400 world-class foundations and government organizations use Fluxx, including 10 of the top 20 grantmakers, giving more than \$20 billion and impacting more than 150,000 non-profits annually.

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