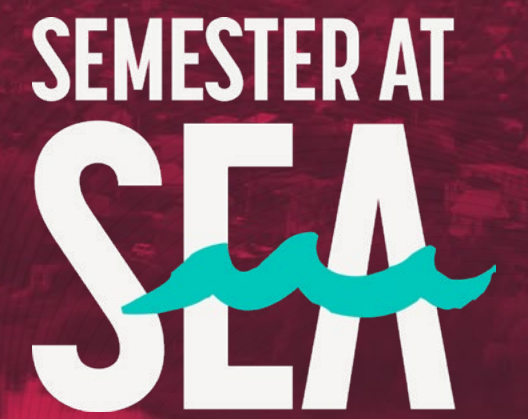**SEMESTER AT SEA**

Institute for Shipboard Education Uses LastPass to Cut Onboarding Time in Half for their Semester at Sea Program

Overview

Semester at Sea is a study-abroad program founded and managed by the Institute for Shipboard Education. For over 60 years, the Institute for Shipboard Education (ISE) has offered students a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity: earning college credit while traveling the world aboard a ship.

Each Semester at Sea voyage brings hundreds of students, faculty, and staff together for an immersive global learning experience. Behind the scenes, ISE manages complex IT operations spanning continents and oceans.

Educational institutions like ISE require a solution to secure sensitive data, streamline operations, and adopt modern authentication methods, all without sacrificing user experience.

Challenge

"We have a home office team, two ship IT technicians, and rotating admins assigned by our cruise partner. Every semester, we completely reconfigure the ship's network. And every semester, we onboard a new set of faculty and staff."

— Alex Ryan
IT Systems Analyst at the Institute for Shipboard Education

When Alex Ryan joined ISE as an IT Systems Analyst, he quickly realized the complexity of the security ecosystem.

ISE's model creates unique challenges, including:

👥 **Constant turnover/staff changes:** Faculty and staff rotate every voyage, creating a never-ending cycle of onboarding and offboarding.

📂 **Shared access needs:** Multiple IT admins and departments require secure access to critical systems and network schematics.

🌐 **Global complexity:** Switching between charters means rebuilding firewalls and configurations from scratch.

⚠️ **Risky practices:** Passwords were scattered across emails, spreadsheets, and notepads.

LastPass

Solution

ISE adopted **LastPass Business** to centralize password management and enforce strong security practices between the home office and the ship. Credentials remain accessible through the **Chrome extension**, even when devices change. Academics, HR, and communications teams rely on shared access for critical materials, including videography and advertising assets from previous voyages. This continuity enables smooth transitions and efficient operations.

Key benefits of LastPass:

- **Shared Vaults:** IT, academics, HR, and communications teams securely share credentials for critical systems and vendors.

- **Security Score Monitoring:** Allows insight into improving password hygiene.

- **Mobile Access:** Staff can access credentials across ship phones and office devices.

Impact

Initially, LastPass was implemented throughout the institution based on individual business cases. Today, it's standard for every position, including rotating ship roles. Moving to a full-coverage approach has streamlined collaboration and improved security across departments, and new hires express relief knowing they don't need to memorize complex, 20-character passwords.

"**We've expanded LastPass to everyone, so they can be more efficient and coordinate with their teams better.**"
— Alex Ryan
  IT Systems Analyst at the Institute for Shipboard Education

What's Next

Alex plans to continue improving ISE's security practices with LastPass. These include gamifying security score improvements to encourage best practices across teams, increasing visibility into apps being used with SaaS Monitoring, and rolling out Passkeys for phishing-resistant authentication. Together, these efforts will further strengthen security across their global learning community.

"**Passkeys will make life so much easier. Remembering passwords is stressful, especially for new hires, so being able to use a fingerprint or PIN is so much faster and simpler.**"
— Alex Ryan
  IT Systems Analyst at the Institute for Shipboard Education

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"**I recently onboarded two rotating ship positions in 45 minutes. Before LastPass, that would've taken two hours and involved a lot of notes.**"
— Alex Ryan, *IT Systems Analyst at the Institute for Shipboard Education*

CONTACT US TODAY

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