

Customer Profile

PokerStars

RSA SecurID® strengthens security on world's most popular poker website

Acceleration

"RSA SecurID tokens have enabled us to provide high net worth customers with extremely robust security for their accounts. This in turn reinforces and accelerates our reputation as the world's leading online poker site."

Michael Josem, Games Security Specialist, PokerStars

AT A GLANCE

Business Challenge

- Offer enhanced security for its high-value customers, many of whom have hundred of thousands dollars in their accounts
- Ensure existing security measures for online player protection were not affected by the implementation of a two-factor authentication solution
- Build and reinforce the company's brand as the world's leading online poker website

Solution

- Offer high-value customers the opportunity to redeem VIP points in return for a RSA SecurID token which automatically changes passwords every sixty seconds
- Implement RSA SecurID® Authentication Engine, a back-end authentication solution designed to easily integrate with existing home-grown security applications

Results

- Three thousand RSA SecurID tokens have been taken by players in the first five months and almost a further 3,000 expected to be adopted in the following 4 months
- Strengthening of PokerStars brand as the world's pre-eminent organisation for online poker players

Since being founded in September 2001 PokerStars has grown into the world's largest online poker site. It has 35 per cent of world market share and, to date more than 26 million players across the globe. It also hosts an annual PokerStars World Championship of Online Poker (WCOOP). Based in the Isle of Man, UK, the company has built a reputation for integrity and player opportunity. To find out more visit:

<http://www.PokerStars.com/about/>

BUSINESS CHALLENGE



PokerStars has developed an enviable reputation as a leading online poker site which offers players the opportunity to win substantial amounts of money. It has bolstered its considerable brand presence by qualifying more poker players for the World Series of Poker than all the other online poker sites combined, and by running its own PokerStars World Championship of Online Poker (WCOOP).

Its brand presence is also underpinned by the knowledge that PokerStars' players can potentially win huge amounts of money. In

2004, one online competitor, Chris MoneyMaker (real name), started with about \$30 in his account but eventually went on to win several million dollars when he qualified on PokerStars.com to play in the World Series of Poker. This provided a boost for the company leading to a huge surge in popularity with many more players signing up.

Security is clearly a critically important and central feature for its website. In fact, since its launch the company has never suffered a network breach. However, that said, PokerStars wanted to offer its high-value customers, many of whom have hundreds of thousands of dollars in their accounts, the option to strengthen their personal security even further.



The Security Division of EMC





SOLUTION

The privately-owned PokerStars has a wide range of security features in place to protect its network ranging from firewalls, to intrusion detection systems and network traffic logging to real-time monitoring. Michael Josem, Games Security Specialist, PokerStars said: “We do everything to safeguard our network and our players but we also wanted to offer a certain type of player the option of extra security to bolster their personal security.”

The company decided on RSA SecurID, two-factor authentication tokens from RSA, the Security Division of EMC, simply because, “RSA is the largest and most trusted vendor in the industry with the strongest two-factor authentication,” said Josem. Based on something you know (a password or PIN) and something you have (an authenticator). RSA SecurID provides an extremely reliable level of user authentication and is the only solution that automatically changes passwords every 60 seconds.

One of the key factors informing the decision was RSA SecurID Authentication Engine (SAE) an easy to implement authentication software solution. SAE easily integrates directly into an organisation’s homegrown externally-facing security application.

Consisting of a set of Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) it permitted PokerStars to provide back-end authentication for RSA SecurID technology without requiring significant infrastructure and application changes to the company’s existing environment.

PokerStars had pre-existing capabilities for user management security policy, password management and reporting, that provided online gamers with secure access to their accounts. SAE dovetailed neatly with this system.

As a result, the company began offering the RSA SecurID tokens to high-value players through a VIP programme. Players simply redeemed points they had collected when playing poker games to obtain a hardware token that provided strong two-factor authentication and could be hung from a key ring.

RESULTS

By upgrading account security to a two-factor authentication process – the player’s unique password plus the unique number generated by the token – players with large amounts of money now have unrivalled security and peace of mind.

The company first offered players the opportunity to redeem points in exchange for a RSA SecurID token in March 2009. Within the first five months 3,000 tokens were taken. By the end of 2009, PokerStars is anticipating close to 6,000 tokens will be in use.

The proof of the initiative became evident when a player’s password was compromised by a key stroke logger that had gained access to his computer. However, the attempted theft failed when the hacker was faced with a request for the RSA SecurID code number.

The RSA SecurID system also inspired PokerStars to extend the concept of PIN-based security by providing players with a new PIN service used in conjunction with an existing password. Together with the RSA SecurID token, an extremely robust security system is now in place.

PokerStars has benefited from a two-factor authentication system that was easily integrated into existing systems. The loyalty of valuable high-net worth customers has been reinforced and the company’s reputation as the world’s leading online poker site has been bolstered even further.



“RSA is the largest and most trusted vendor in the industry with the strongest two-factor authentication. Its RSA SecurID Authentication Engine is also very easy to implement with our existing security, so making the choice to go with RSA was very simple.”

Michael Josem, Games Security Specialist,
PokerStars



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