



Sporting Index makes a safe bet on nCipher

Technology from nCipher, a leading provider of IT cryptographic security, is helping Sporting Index to gear up for a rush of online betting during World Cup 2002. nCipher nForce™ secure SSL Accelerators are being used by Sporting Index to increase throughput and avoid bottlenecks on its Sporting Index and Sporting Odds web sites as well as to increase levels of security for online gamblers.

The challenge

Sporting Index – the world leaders in online sports spread betting and the first company to introduce interactive online sports spread betting - expects to take over 135,000 bets on its web sites during the World Cup period. As well as putting money on the winners and losers, visitors can also bet on outcomes ranging from the number of goals and missed penalties to off-sides, yellow and red cards, and even how many players will take their shirts off in goal celebrations throughout the tournament.

Customer privacy lies at the heart of all the service offerings from Sporting Index. Not only must credit card details and account information be kept secret but so too must information relating to trading patterns and individual wins or losses. To protect sensitive customer information and transaction details Sporting Index uses standard SSL (Secure Socket Layer) encryption. But as processing SSL transactions puts a heavy burden on web servers, surges in demand can slow down response times and at worst bring sites to a halt.

The encryption and decryption functions delivered by SSL depend upon cryptographic keys to lock and unlock the sensitive data. One of the most important aspects of data encryption is the protection and secrecy of these keys. All encryption keys should be created, stored, distributed and changed only under the most stringent conditions. To protect sensitive information using software alone is not enough. Software-based security products decrypt sensitive data in unsecured memory, displaying both keys and algorithms in readable form, which makes the data vulnerable to cyber attacks.

The Solution

nCipher nForce units are integrated into the Sporting Index Web infrastructure to deliver both cryptographic acceleration and FIPS (Federal Information Processing Standard) 140 Level 2 validated key management facilities. These secure hardware based SSL accelerators were supplied and installed by London-based IT Action, Sporting Index's prime technology support provider. "Online betting is one of the fastest growing areas of e-commerce and it is clear that the World Cup will put the leading web sites to the test," says Yogesh Patel, Managing Director at IT Action.

"By managing these sensitive private encryption keys in a FIPS-validated tamper-resistant hardware environment and not on the web server, Sporting Index can guarantee its customers a much greater level of security for their personal information" added Hugo Smith.

The Benefits

By implementing a security architecture anchored by nCipher's products, Sporting Index is able to:

- Maintain a competitive edge by being able to serve more customers and meet peak demand. Sporting Index can now handle over 100 transactions per minute.
- Deliver secure online services by protecting private keys in highly secure hardware that meets the widely recognized FIPS (Federal Information Processing Standard) 140-1, Level 2 security benchmark.
- Enhance server performance with powerful acceleration capabilities and processing power. nForce eliminates potential SSL bottlenecks before they become a problem. By off-loading SSL processing



on to nCipher nForce secure SSL accelerators, Expand server-processing capacity. Adding nForce to a secure Web server can yield a 20-fold increase in processing capacity – without purchasing additional expensive servers.

- Build scalability into a secure infrastructure. nForce is a modular solution, allowing additional capacity to be easily added to meet growing SSL processing demands

“By installing the nCipher secure SSL accelerators, Sporting Index is well placed to handle the peak demand while further increasing customer confidence by adding another layer of security. It is not uncommon for web sites to experience sudden surges in demand and no company should risk damaging new customer relationships by leaving them waiting online while transactions are processed” says Colin Bastable, Vice President of International Sales at nCipher. “Trading online, whether it is betting, retailing or financial services is all about providing a fast, efficient and secure service. nCipher's products provide speed without compromising security. We're delighted to be working in partnership with such a visionary e-business as Sporting Index.”

Conclusion

As the market leading 'live' interactive on-line sports spread betting service, Sporting Index know the importance of seamlessly handling high volumes of requests from Web site visitors while maintaining the highest standards of protection for sensitive customer information. The deployment of nForce secure SSL accelerators delivers the capacity to handle peaks in SSL traffic while protecting the cryptographic keys that underpin the encryption that provides confidentiality.

“The World Cup 2002 has attracted many thousands of new online gamblers and places great demands on our web sites,” says Hugo Smith, IT Director at Sporting Index. “We have a first class reputation for performance and privacy which we can not afford to compromise. nCipher's technology is playing a vital role in delivering a high level of service and security so that our customers enjoy a fast and exciting betting experience on our Sporting Index and Sporting Odds web sites.”

For more information on Sporting Index online please visit www.sportingindex.com