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Urban Rytmarker
Systems Administrator
Symsoft



CUSTOMER NAME

Symsoft AB

INDUSTRY

Telecommunications

CHECK POINT PRODUCTS

- VPN-1® Pro™
- VPN-1 Edge™
- VPN-1 SecureClient™

CUSTOMER NEEDS MET

- Secured network access for remote offices and mobile users
- Ensured security for remote support of business-critical customer installations
- Provided strong authentication that covers Web-based email

Symsoft supports customers securely via Check Point VPN-1

ABOUT SYMSOFT AB

Symsoft AB enables telecommunications operators to offer subscribers profitable new services, such as using their mobile phones to send and receive messages that combine music and pictures. For example, O2 Vodaphone, the fastest-growing mobile operator in Iceland, let viewers cast votes via SMS text messages in the 50th annual Eurovision Song Contest using a solution from Symsoft that ensured uninterrupted delivery of the high-volume traffic. Customers of Symsoft’s real-time solutions for messaging, billing, and data-packet services include major operators in Asia, Europe, and South America, reaching more than 80 million subscribers. Based in Stockholm, the company also has offices in Dubai and Ecuador.

THE SYMSOFT CHALLENGE

With 60 employees, Symsoft is a small company with a long reach. It installs its Java-based software on open servers that it ships to customer locations on three continents. “We have an obligation to provide 24-hour support for our customers,” says Urban Rytmarker, Symsoft systems administrator. “We have to be able to log on to the Symsoft network and then connect remotely to our customer installations anywhere.”

Connecting to a customer’s real-time, mission-critical systems makes security vital. Compromised security in a customer installation could have profound consequences, according to Rytmarker. “With millions of subscribers, just one hour of lost billings would amount to significant revenue losses for a customer. Someone piggybacking on our connections and compromising customer systems would be a serious problem that could affect the reputation and future of Symsoft,” Rytmarker says.

As a software developer, Symsoft is also concerned about protecting its main asset — its source code — from theft or damage by network intruders.

THE CHECK POINT SOLUTION

The most cost-effective way for a small company with a global presence to establish an IT infrastructure is to link its distant offices, people, and customers through virtual private networks (VPNs) on the Internet. Symsoft shields itself and its customers from the rampant risks of the Internet by using Check Point VPN-1® Pro™ software, a tightly integrated combination of firewall, VPN, and intrusion prevention

technologies. The Dubai office connects to the Symsoft internal network through a VPN-1 Edge™ appliance that Rytmarker manages from Stockholm. The appliance also provides integrated firewall, VPN, and intrusion prevention—ensuring that the Dubai office stays secure and information traveling between the two locations remains confidential.

VPN-1 Edge provides a simple-to-use and easy-to-deploy connectivity solution for customer sites that do not have VPN implementations of their own. For example, Symsoft configures, upgrades, and troubleshoots its installation at a GSM network operator in Germany through a VPN-1 Edge appliance that it owns and manages at the customer premises.

Remote Symsoft users, including the office workers in Ecuador, gain secure access to the home network via VPN-1 SecureClient™. Installed on every Symsoft remote computer and managed centrally from Stockholm, VPN-1 SecureClient protects data during transmission and ensures compliance with the company's desktop security policies for remote users.

With all-important source code and business-critical customer networks to protect, Symsoft needs strong user authentication. Memorized passwords are just too vulnerable for Symsoft—hackers can easily guess or steal them. OPSEC-certified SafeWord for Check Point, from Secure Computing Corporation, eliminates password risk by using tokens to generate new passcodes for every user login. SafeWord user self-enrollment and Check Point integrated management help make strong authentication very practical for a company the size of Symsoft.

BENEFITS OF CHECK POINT SECURITY

Before implementing VPN-1 Pro, Symsoft employed a dialup solution for remote access that its employees used infrequently. "VPN-1 Pro provided a more workable, modern solution," Rytmarker says. "Using the Internet to connect to Sweden is cost effective, but the biggest advantage is productivity. We didn't use remote access much before. Now remote access is business critical."

Customer confidence

As a small company, Symsoft helps secure the confidence of its customers by using the top technology suppliers. "Check Point and Secure Computing are the leading providers of security solutions worldwide," Rytmarker says. "That inspires the confidence of our customers, especially since we access their installations remotely to perform upgrades and support."

'All the features we wanted'

According to its internal technical survey, Symsoft's best available option for VPNs pointed toward Check Point. "The Check Point solution had all the features we wanted," Rytmarker says.

That included good access control and, very important to him, an efficient, easy-to-use management interface for the system administrator.

Impressive flexibility

Almost daily, Rytmarker is called upon to meet some new access requirement. Partners need network access for product testing or a sales representative needs access from a prospective customer's location for a product demonstration. "There is an ever-shifting need to set up new access control rules and VPN connections—temporary or permanent. No matter what the situation, I can always solve the problem," he says. "This flexibility is the most impressive aspect of the Check Point solution."

Strong authentication that covers Web-based email

Symsoft used to employ certificates for user authentication, but this had a limitation. Users could not be authenticated for access to internal Web-based emails from public Internet cafes and kiosks. SafeWord for Check Point has solved that problem by issuing tokens for one-time passcodes within moments of access requests—without requiring any client software on the endpoint. Now users can stay in touch with their businesses through Web email from anywhere—and the company has the protection of strong authentication.

"And SafeWord for Check Point provides us with a low total cost of ownership authentication solution," Rytmarker says. "We didn't want to have to rent our tokens as is the model with a major authentication vendor—with SafeWord for Check Point, the tokens do not expire, and Secure Computing guarantees replacement if the tokens fail now or 10 years from now."

THE FUTURE OF SYMSOFT AB

Because remote access has become so critical to the way Symsoft conducts business, the company is now looking at Check Point Integrity™ solutions for even stronger endpoint security. Rytmarker is interested in the ability of Integrity SecureClient to detect and block intrusions, remove spyware, and allow network access only for computers in compliance with company security policies, including requirements for antivirus and operating-system patches.

With Check Point, Symsoft has a flexible security infrastructure that can easily grow with the company. It can quickly bring new offices online—like the one planned for Dallas—by deploying VPN-1 Edge appliances that provide secure remote network connectivity without any onsite administration.

"Today, we are a small company, but we cannot afford to compromise on security because we connect to systems that are business-critical to our customers," Rytmarker says. "However, Check Point and Secure Computing provide an economic solution that satisfies our security needs."

CONTACT CHECK POINT

Worldwide Headquarters

5 Ha' Solelim Street, Tel Aviv 67897, Israel | Tel: 972-3-753-4555 | Fax: 972-3-624-1100 | Email: info@checkpoint.com

U.S. Headquarters

800 Bridge Parkway, Redwood City, CA 94065 | Tel: 800-429-4391; 650-628-2000 | Fax: 650-654-4233 | www.checkpoint.com

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