CASE STUDY: Webber Wentzel

Major South African law firm depends on PINgrid to secure remote access to sensitive client documents

The Challenge

The firm, which employs 700 total staff, provides legal support to South African and international clients in relation to their operations in the rest of Africa. As the business continues to grow and expand, more of the firm's 360 lawyers are working remotely, and clients also need access to sensitive documents and information from all around Africa - and the world.

Seven of the world's ten fastest growing economies this decade are predicted to be in Sub-Saharan Africa, creating huge opportunities for firms such as Webber Wentzel, a South African-based legal firm with offices in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Rustenburg.

The challenge for the IT department, therefore, is to provide access to information that is convenient, fast and reliable for employees, partners and clients - but also offers world-class security. "We simply can't take any chances with security of documents," explains Pierre Liddle, IT Information Security Risk Manager. "It would be devastating to our reputation if sensitive information was leaked or lost."

Webber Wentzel was keen to build an extranet that could be used to provide personalised remote access to corporate applications and data. It first began looking for a remote access security solution in 2010, shortly after rolling out Microsoft UAG. While UAG offered remote access functionality, it didn't offer the 1.5 and 2 factor authentication that Webber Wentzel required, so Liddle began investigating third-party solutions.

Enter the Matrix

After evaluating a number of products, Liddle discovered PINgrid, a new 1.5 and 2 factor authentication system that uses Matrix Pattern Authentication to authenticate users.

With PINgrid, users logging into an application don't need passwords, tokens or PIN numbers. Instead, when they log in to the network, they are presented with a grid of coloured squares, each containing a single digit. The user must enter the numbers that correlate with a pattern that has previously been agreed as theirs.

For example if a user's chosen pattern is the six squares that cross a 6x6 matrix diagonally from top right to bottom left, then when they log in to the system, they enter whichever six numbers are in those squares. The complexity of the patterns which users are allowed to input can be defined by the IT department, and may be customised for different users, applications and locations. This type of authentication is infinitely more secure than a conventional PIN or password, and that is vitally important for a firm like Webber Wentzel.

Solution Highlights

- Strong 1.5 and 2 factor authentication using a visual pattern
- Cost effective compared to token-based authentication solutions
- Secure remote access to internal and cloud-based applications
- Active Directory or LDAP database storage without extending the schema
- FIPS 198 & 180-3 compliant cryptography that exceeds OATH specifications
- Rapid user provisioning with auto-generated patterns
- RADIUS & Web Services interface for universal integration
- Free Soft Token download from all major phone application stores
- Out of the box support for Microsoft IIS web servers and Forefront TMG 2010 & UAG 2010

Products Used

- Authlogics PINgrid
- Microsoft UAG 2010

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Authlogics

www.authlogics.com I Strong Authentication made Simple!

"The solution is less susceptible to eavesdropping and users don't have to carry phones or keypads with them, which makes the whole arrangement very simple."

"The product meets all of our requirements, and best of all, it's cost-effective without burdening the user with a new security bottleneck."

Pierre Liddle
IT Information Security Risk Manager
Webber Wentzel

Grid Pattern Authentication: Simple, Memorable and Secure

PINgrid Solutions make work easier

The Solution

Another advantage of PINgrid was that it integrated seamlessly with Microsoft UAG, minimising the need for integration and further improving security, says Liddle.

"Part of our decision was definitely that we could re-use and integrate those technologies - not just with Microsoft UAG but subsequently also with Microsoft Direct Access."

"People understood the concept very quickly and after two or three times, they found it very natural."

Pierre Liddle
IT Information Security Risk Manager
Webber Wentzel
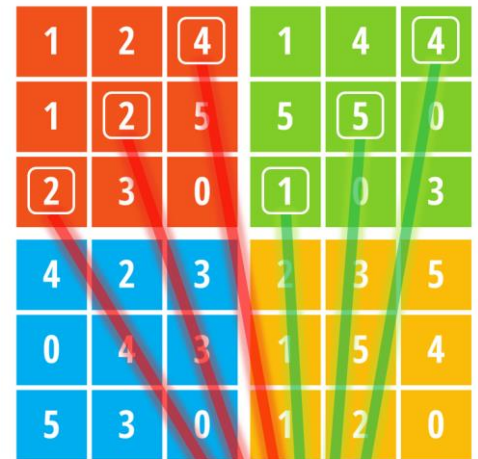
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"Of all the products we looked at, this was the only one where we knew we'd be happy to use it to provide access to sensitive client documents and information. It seemed to pick up where competing products left off."

Pierre Liddle, IT Information Security Risk Manager, Webber Wentzel

Webber Wentzel initially rolled out grid logon technology to the IT department in June 2011, before offering access to lawyers of in the firm who were working remotely and had been identified as 'early adopters' of new technology.

"The solution is less susceptible to eavesdropping and users don't have to carry phones or keypads with them, which makes the whole arrangement very simple." In the

coming months, Liddle and his team hope to add more staff to the PINgrid platform. "We are really happy with the benefits PINgrid and Authlogics offered us great support and flexibility." Liddle says.

"The product meets all of our requirements, and best of all, it's cost-effective without burdening the user with a new security bottleneck.

📞 UK/MEA +44(0)1344 568900

📞 US +1 408 706 2866

✉ sales@authlogics.com

🖥 www.authlogics.com

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