



Saab serves the global market with world-leading products, services and solutions ranging from military defence to civil security.

SAAB significantly reduces their costs while maintaining good security

Within Saabs business units working with products ranging from cars to military aircraft and advanced space technology, a common factor is a great demand for high level of security. Saab has a policy which means all employees must use strong authentication in order to gain access to the company network. Nordic Edge's solution safeguards Saabs network, reduce administration and costs when hardware token devices are replaced by one time passwords delivered by SMS to the users cell phone.

Within Saabs broad operations at Linköping, Sweden there are business units with responsibility for everything from cars to military aircraft and advance space technology. A common factor in all these business units is a high level of technology and a great demand for secure information management. According to Bengt Karlén, security coordinator for Saab Aero-systems, Saab Aerostructure (building aircraft such as Gripen, Boeing and Airbus) and Saabs support department, the increased use of laptop computers has brought new security challenges. These new challenges stem partly from the fact that laptop computers are more susceptible to theft and also the risk of unauthorized access from mobile locations.

Saab has a policy which means all employees must use strong authentication in order to gain access to the company network. The solution chosen requires authentication with a two-factor method, in this case with a password and a token generator or authenticator.

"We were happy with the security level this solution provided. However it was difficult to get an overview of the total cost of the system, there was a feeling that it was much more than we had first calculated", said Bengt Karlén.

Challenge

An investigation showed that Saab was right about its security costs being high. This was partly due to costs for the token generation hardware for each user, but also due to high administration demands. Every time a user forgot their password an administrator was forced to enter the system, change the configuration and send a new token generator to the user. The same was true when a token generator broke or just needed replacing after three or four years.



"Aside from the discovery that it was very costly to manage the token generators, many of the around 400 employees who travel a great deal found that the wallet sized token generators were clumsy to carry everywhere", said Bengt Karlén.



nordic edge



Solution

Saab hired Kerfi, an IT consultancy company, to find a solution that was as secure as the previous solution, but both cheaper and less complex to manage. Kerfi recommended Nordic Edge's one time password (OTP) solution delivering passwords via SMS to the users' cell phones. By registering the users cell phone number in a directory service during the first time the user authenticates, administration is minimized.

Today the solution is used for the mobile network by Saab Aerosystems, Saab Aerostructure and the support department. About 400 of the users, who travel a great deal, mostly sales and support staff, are using the system. In areas where cell phone coverage may vary in quality it is still possible to use the one time password system. The users who know in advance that they may be traveling to an area with questionable cell coverage can simply be equipped with the number of pre-generated one time passwords that they require before they travel.

Even though Saab continues to use the old token generator hardware solution for non-mobile users, the company is seeing significant savings. Just not having to provide and maintain the token generator hardware for the 400 mobile users saves, according to Saab's calculations, about 50 000 Euro per year. The company doesn't need to buy the hardware and no longer needs to use valuable administrator time on lost or broken token generators. In addition the users have one less thing to remember when they travel, since they no longer need the token generator.



"Since everyone takes their cell phone with them anyway, it's perfect that we can also use it for secure authentication. This, together with the fact that we can save money without reducing our security, means that we are satisfied with this solution", said Bengt Karlén.

About Saab

Saab serves the global market with world-leading products, services and solutions ranging from military defence to civil security. Saab has operations and employees on all continents and constantly develops, adopts and improves new technology to meet customers' changing needs.

With 13,700 employees, Saab's operations cover all continents and Saab products and services are found in more than 50 countries around the world. Annual sales are €2.5 billion. Research and development corresponds to about 20 percent of annual sales.

Benefits

- No need for specific hardware for delivery of one time passwords.
- No logistics nightmare distributing and supporting code delivery hardware.
- No need for policy decisions and policing – people take care of their cell phones and do not lend them.
- Modest investment, minimal support effort.

About Nordic Edge™

Nordic Edge AB is a Swedish company developing and marketing platform independent products and services for secure identity management. The offering includes access control, authentication and user administration.

The customer list includes the Swedish Social Insurance Office, SAAB, Ericsson, the City of Stockholm, EniAgip (Italy) and the Swiss Government. Nordic Edge™ products manage more than 1 million identities.

Learn more about Nordic Edge™ Certificate Services, Nordic Edge™ One Time Password and Nordic Edge™ Identity Manager on www.nordicedge.se



nordic edge