Columbitech Mobile VPN Helps U.S. Military Retailer NEXCOM Reach PCI Compliance

The Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) is using Columbitech's FIPS 140-2 certified mobile VPN for its worldwide retail locations to comply with the Payment Card Industry's (PCI's) security standards for its wireless infrastructure. The mobile VPN enables mobility and increases productivity throughout the retail operations.

THE CHALLENGE

NEXCOM was using Symbol PDT 6846 legacy mobile computers in its stores and distribution centers. The DOS-based mobile computers used WEP, which in recent years has shown itself to be a weak security protocol. Data security is top priority, and NEXCOM was looking for a way to secure it existing infrastructure and comply with the PCI standard without having to replace all the hardware.

THE SOLUTION

The Columbitech Mobile VPN was the only solution that could secure all existing equipment, including DOS-based mobile computers and new devices running Windows Mobile 5.0 and 6. The mobile VPN solution provides a secure VPN tunnel between legacy DOS-based mobile handheld devices and the wired local area network utilized in NEXCOM's distribution centers and retail stores. The Columbitech VPN software was deployed on more than 1,200 wireless devices.

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verage our investment in the mobile devices, providing operational functionality with needed wireless security," says Kean Westcott, NEXCOM's senior vice president, and chief information officer.

The mobile VPN client provided secure wireless access through mutual authentication and strong encryption of data, which is a requirement for PCI compliance.

In addition to the Columbitech application server and client software, NEXCOM purchased server hardware for each site that was running the LINUX operating system.

Nexcom has 344 stores catering to military personnel and their families around the world. With legacy devices communicating over wireless networks, data security was a concern.

OVERVIEW

Customer

Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM)

With 344 stores located within 107 naval installations around the world, NEXCOM provides active duty military, retirees, reservists and their families with quality brand-name merchandise and services at competitively low prices, and supports quality of life programs.

The Challenge

How to secure all wireless equipment running DOS and to make sure that all equipment comply with the PCI requirements without paying for a costly rip-and-replace of all devices.

The Solution

The Columbitech Mobile VPN software was the only PCI compliant solution that could protect legacy equipment as well as new devices. The Columbitech solution enabled NEXCOM to leverage its current investment in mobile devices without purchasing new hardware.

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"Integration to back-office systems was minimal, other than ensuring that we could offload the logging process. As far as the actual connection, once the connection was made between the handheld device and the Columbitech server, the back office systems were unaware that anything had changed from a network standpoint," explains Mr. Westcott.

The Columbitech solution simplified the deployment and administration, allowing NEXCOM to protect its entire wireless infrastructure with one single solution. For the deployment, NEXCOM used AirBEAM Smart© from Motorola to remotely set up and configure the VPN servers and clients. This provided a faster deployment with a central point of control over the software and all the mobile devices.

"Mobile computing is a necessity in retail store and distribution center operations," continues Mr. Westcott. "Buying new mobile devices would have been about eight times as expensive as purchasing the Columbitech software".

Columbitech Mobile VPN meets the highest industry security standards and is FIPS 140-2 certified by NITS. It protects NEXCOM's enterprise systems from unauthorized access and encrypts all the data all the way from the wireless device to the corporate firewall. The mobile VPN also provides additional benefits that conventional VPNs don't, such as seamless roaming with session persistence and automatic data recovery. These are important features in wireless applications, since it allows users to move in and out of coverage and the device can hibernate, without losing the session or any data, and the user does not have to repeat the log-in process. The Columbitech Mobile VPN enables mobility and increases productivity, and is completely seamless to the user.

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The Columbitech Mobile VPN is a scalable security software based solution with support for 100,000 plus units. By investing in the Columbitech platform, NEXCOM has gained a secure migration path to future technologies. The platform can be implemented on a broad variety of wireless devices, enables future applications, such as wireless POS and VoIP; and protects wide area network devices.

COLUMBITECH

ABOUT COLUMBITECH

Columbitech, the world's most deployed mobile VPN provider, enables fearless enterprise mobility and unleashes the power of wireless. Its software solution offers seamless security for any mobile device and application, with support for WLAN and public networks, including 3G, GPRS, EVDO and WiMAX. The Columbitech solution provides transparent access to enterprise applications from any network, without requiring any changes to hardware.

With more than 2 million deployed users, customers include three of the top ten U.S. retailers, several large European service providers and all military branches in the U.S. The embedded solution is OEM licensed by leading companies, including Motorola and Ericsson. The Columbitech solution holds a FIPS 140-2 certification. The company is privately held, with offices in Stockholm, Sweden, and New York, USA.

For more information, visit www.columbitech.com.

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