

PROBLEM

- Providing secure 24/7 access to insurance databases, without complicated and costly configurations

RESULT

- Web-based emulation that provides more robust security and is available to customers immediately

SECURE WEB ACCESS CURES SETUP HEADACHES AT PHARMACY DATA MANAGEMENT

Prescription benefit plans vary widely and change frequently, so tracking each patient's eligibility and coverage for prescription benefits can be a complicated process. Pharmacy Data Management (PDM) provides insurance companies with a comprehensive data center, making it easier to process insurance claims, produce customized reports, and manage cash flow. Unfortunately, when PDM used virtual private networks (VPN) to keep the data secure, it routinely took a month or longer for new customers to access PDM's services. Now, with WRQ Reflection[®] for the Web, PDM's customers are able to access services over the Web almost instantaneously. And features in Reflection for the Web help them comply with strict HIPAA confidentiality requirements.

PDM's customers—insurance companies, HMO's, self-insured major employers, and anyone else who needs to process prescription claims—need to have ready access to their databases to add new patients, modify information about patients, and adjust plan benefits. Previously, PDM offered Windows[®]-based terminal emulation to its customers, using a VPN to keep the data secure. But a VPN solution requires that each customer deploy a VPN client, demanding a cumbersome configuration process. Each customer's IT department had to purchase and configure new hardware, set up a dedicated Internet connection, and designate a static IP address. If everything went smoothly, it usually took about a month for a customer to gain access, but glitches in the configuration process could easily delay access for months, or even a year.

Transitioning to a Web-based Solution

Steve Randlett, a network administrator at PDM, thought there must be an easier way to provide secure access to their customers, and he knew that the Web would be a better way to deliver this service. "That's a

question we get a lot—can I run this on the Web?" he said. The first Web-emulation product he found was disappointing because it required a tedious configuration procedure. Inspired by the positive experience he'd had with Reflection products in the past, Mr. Randlett turned to WRQ[®]. When he evaluated Reflection for the Web, he found the easy configuration he'd been looking for, without sacrificing security.

It didn't take long to deploy Reflection for the Web. WRQ's technical support staff helped Pharmacy Data Management find quick solutions to the few minor configuration problems they did have. And they were able to tailor their use of Reflection for the Web to meet their specific security needs. Beyond authenticating users, Pharmacy Data Management needs to verify that the user is accessing the Reflection for the Web terminal session from a secure computer. To meet this need, Mr. Randlett created an ASP page that checks the IP address of the client workstation and then queries a SQL database. If the IP address is from an authorized location, the user can access the Reflection for the Web session.

No More Configuration Headaches

Using Reflection for the Web, customers can access PDM's services almost instantly. Pharmacy Data Management simply tells the customer which Web address to use. If necessary, the customer's IT department allows an outbound connection through the firewall to the port PDM uses for Reflection for the Web. From that point on, customers have direct access to their data using an intuitive interface. They can update data, run reports, and process claims any time of day, any day of the year.

Reflection for the Web also offers robust security features. "There are a lot of security risks involved in a VPN that I can avoid with WRQ Reflection for the Web," said Mr. Randlett. That's especially important in the health care industry, where organizations are revising their processes to comply with HIPAA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act passed by Congress in 1996. The act includes stringent new guidelines for ensuring the privacy of patients' health information. Authentication and encryption features in Reflection for the Web help healthcare organizations ensure they comply with HIPAA requirements, making that part of the process easier.

How do PDM's customers feel about Reflection for the Web? "End users really like it, so it makes us look good," Mr. Randlett said. "They're able to access us through the Web, which is easy for them. Not everyone offers that kind of easy connectivity."

PDM's customers aren't the only ones who appreciate the streamlined deployment of Reflection for the Web. Because there are no extra costs or messy configurations, it's much easier to sell PDM's services. Mr. Randlett said, "Our marketing team loves it because they have easy answers for our customers. If you have an Internet connection and a browser, you can log in and do what you need to do."

A Smooth Upgrade Brings Time-saving Features

PDM first deployed Reflection for the Web 4.5. When WRQ released version 5.0, PDM didn't hesitate to upgrade. The upgrade went smoothly, and they can still use the ASP page they created to verify the user's location. Mr. Randlett appreciates several of the new features in Reflection for the Web 5.0. New RSA support for encryption and key exchange eliminates the need to create a security archive file and sign it with a certificate from a certifying authority, a requirement in earlier versions of the product. The centralized management features also save time. Mr. Randlett can create sessions and save them automatically on the Reflection server—and he can administer the product from any workstation. Version 5.0 even detects automatically which web browser the customer is using, making it easier to deploy Reflection for the Web on a variety of client workstations.

Overall, Reflection for the Web has made life easier for customers, and, therefore, for the network administrator. "I'm a big fan of the product," said Mr. Randlett. "It was relatively simple to deploy. It provided adequate security, and it's got a good look and feel. It does the emulation very well."

About WRQ

For 22 years, WRQ has developed high-quality software, backed by #1 rated customer support. WRQ software extends host applications, rapidly integrating them for new applications or new users. Four out of five Fortune 500 companies rely on WRQ daily. With over six million users in 51 countries, WRQ is one of the largest privately held software companies in the U.S. To learn more about the company's Reflection and Verastream[®] products, visit www.wrq.com/products.



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