



A Sure Bet for Secure Remote Application Access: Rank Group Gaming Division Utilises the PortWise Secure Application Access Platform

Rank Group Gaming Division has adopted PortWise's Remote application access platform as its corporate standard, enabling the company to realise significant cost and time savings, support true collaborative and flexible working, and ensure compliance in the most heavily regulated of industries

Rank Group is one of the UK's leading gaming and entertainment companies and a provider of services to the international film industry. Its Gaming Division owns the Mecca Bingo, Grosvenor Casinos, Hard Rock Casinos and Blue Square brands and employs approximately 10,000 staff.

Enabling True Collaborative and Flexible Working

By the nature of its business, Rank Group Gaming Division employees are distributed across numerous UK sites. These workers already had remote access to email. However, the Division wanted to support true flexible working and enable staff to securely access corporate systems regardless of their location or device.

"A key critical success factor for any solution is its ability to enable staff from disparate locations to access centralised applications," said Stephen Henley, Technical Services Manager, Rank Group Gaming Division. "We envisaged a system that supported true collaborative working; a system where people working away from the office could access their team's files and records, and always be working on the latest documents. We wanted to avoid the nightmare of emailing documents back and forth."

It also envisaged a remote access system that went beyond merely providing secure remote access to important documents.

"We felt that to support true flexible and collaborative working we also needed to provide access to corporate systems such as the Invoice Approval System and the CRM system, for example," added Henley.

It was also important for the Division to provide its employees with a remote application access solution that required only the minimum of equipment.

"We didn't want to burden people with laptops or other equipment. We wanted a system that would be totally agile. One where our staff could just as easily work from the coffee shop, the airport, or the hotel as they could from their home or the office."

As with any remote access solution, security was a key concern. The organisation had already gone some way to protecting its data by implementing terminal services, but this in itself raised issues when it came to granting remote access rights.

"A great concern of ours was that if the solution wasn't completely secure then we would actually be creating an opportunity to introduce viruses, spyware and other malicious software directly into the data centre," continued Henley.

Evaluation

It was with these concerns in mind that the company first began to evaluate remote access solutions.

"PortWise stood out from the competition right from the outset for several reasons," said Henley. "Primarily, its solution was unique because it wasn't just about secure access, but secure, remote application access. PortWise alone offered a complete application access platform, of which SSL VPN formed just one part."

The PortWise Platform

The PortWise software platform provides a holistic approach to secure internal and external access to applications. Going beyond a traditional point security product deployment, the PortWise software platform offers a rich, integrated suite addressing all aspects of secure application access, including user device assessment, strong user authentication, policy-based user authorisation, secure clientless access, access auditing and compliance, and session clean-up. Using the PortWise software platform, it is possible to provide completely secure access to critical information and applications for internal users, the mobile workforce and integrated distributed partner networks from any device in any location.

PortWise enables organisations to securely mobilise their workforce and boost productivity of employees and partners while completely protecting the integrity of their organisation. Another key factor was PortWise's ability to integrate into the existing infrastructure.

"The solution fitted together perfectly with our terminal services environment. Unlike other solutions, files aren't taken from the data centre to the device for updating and then sent back again, which would leave our data centre vulnerable to viruses. We are able to tailor PortWise to dovetail in with our applications. This level of flexibility was unusual compared to most of the other solutions evaluated."

PortWise was also the only solution that ensured strict compliance requirements were met because of its audit functionality. The software platform provides an audit trail, logging who accessed which application, when and what they downloaded. This central capture of all remote access activity provides a permanent record of all application access. This is incredibly important, as the gaming industry is one of the most heavily regulated industries in the country.

Additional Benefits

A favourite feature of PortWise for RGD has been the highly secure two-factor authentication, where a mobile phone or other mobile device is used to provide a second factor of authentication, after user name and password.

"We really like the level of authentication built into PortWise. Employees very rarely forget to carry their mobile phones. A small seed application is loaded onto employees' phones to generate a one-time password. It isn't necessary for the phone to have a signal for the password to be sent. The method is so user friendly that it has become very popular, very quickly, significantly reducing training overhead than we would normally expect with a new technology," said Henley.

I don't believe we could have provided the necessary IT support for flexible working if we hadn't chosen PortWise, because it would have been too costly and taken up too much IT Support

time" said Henley.

"The beauty with it is that the employees only need a browser and mobile phone to access corporate systems. We don't have to worry about supporting home PCs or laptops, or finding the funding for that hardware for that matter. We don't even need to worry what device is being used for access, or whether that device has a virus, because the integrity of the information is completely protected at all times."

Future Developments

"PortWise enabled us to meet all of the expectations we had at the outset for a remote access solution because it offered more than mere facets of secure remote access. It delivered a complete secure application access platform. As a result we didn't have to compromise on our vision or our high standards," concluded Henley.

"The platform is extremely powerful and can support complex security requirements, but is flexible and easy to use. It has enabled us to give our employees completely secure remote access to applications, regardless of time, location or device. It is for these reasons that we not only intend to continue the relationship between PortWise and RGD, but also to extend our use of PortWise to include the whole of Rank Group's Head office in the US."

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