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BT Safeguards Customer Experience and Saves £4.5 Million a Year with CA Single Sign-On

CLIENT PROFILE

Industry: Telecommunications
Company: BT Group
Revenue: £19.4 billion (FY13/14)
Employees: 150,000

BUSINESS

BT provides networked IT, telecommunications, TV, mobile and broadband services to customers around the globe. In the UK alone, the company serves more than 18 million business and consumer customers.

CHALLENGE

To enable future growth and ensure its services remain competitive, BT needs to provide customers with the products they desire on the platform they prefer – including browsers and mobile devices.

SOLUTION

BT developed a reusable cross-platform authentication capability for staff, customers and suppliers using CA Single Sign-On. Federated identities ensure secure access to products using third-party services hosted in the cloud.

BENEFIT

BT is able to deliver a consistent and secure customer experience across all platforms. The solution reduces time to market for new applications, increasing competitive advantage.

Business

Helping customers thrive in a changing world

BT Group provides communications solutions to customers in Europe, the Americas and Asia Pacific. The Group consists of five customer-facing lines of business: BT Consumer, BT Business, BT Wholesale, Openreach and BT Global Services.

The company's principal activities include providing networked IT, telecommunications and broadband services for both residential and business customers around the globe. The communications giant also provides TV services such as BT Sport, access to video content and mobile services to consumers primarily within the UK.

BT serves more than 18 million customers in the UK with 28 million exchange lines, 11.2 million broadband connections and five million TV service subscriptions.

By establishing a customer-centric strategy, BT aims to maximise the potential of its traditional business while also pursuing profitable growth through the provision of forward-looking services, such as TV and content.

Challenge

Accessing services through a wide range of devices

More than eight million customers regularly access services through BT's four portals. A further five million customers regularly access the company's TV services through a wide range of devices, including smartphones and tablets.

Providing customers with secure access to information and subscription services on different devices is a considerable challenge. Customers expect BT to deliver a consistent and secure customer experience across all platforms so they don't have to worry about issues such as identity theft.

Alec Cartwright, Identity Services Architect for BT, comments, "Any problems with identity and information management could be very damaging to our reputation as one of the UK's most trusted brands."

The communications giant also needs to provide staff and suppliers with easy access to key data. BT staff had to remember multiple passwords, a problem exacerbated by the company's diverse IT environment.

Deploying services in a hybrid environment
With innovative new products on the horizon, BT needed to establish a scalable and flexible identity management model. As Cartwright explains, "To deploy new services – the majority of which are user-centric – we need to be able to easily identify, authenticate and authorise users within a profile-driven architecture."

The company's internal and customer services are underpinned by a variety of internal applications and third-party services hosted in the cloud. BT needed a solution that was flexible and extensible to maximise the potential for reuse.

"We needed an access and identity management architecture based on international and open standards that would be able to interoperate with third-party services hosted in the cloud," comments Cartwright.

> "We needed an access and identity management architecture based on international and open standards."

Alec Cartwright
Identity Services Architect, BT

Solution

Establishing a reusable
authentication capability

CA Single Sign-On was among a number of Identity & Access Management solutions already being used across the Group. Following an extensive benchmarking exercise, BT decided to standardise on the CA solution. It now forms the backbone of BT's reusable authentication capability, enabling access to more than 500 applications and services for staff, suppliers and customers.

Every individual that registers is given a unique identity, which is authenticated and authorised using CA Single Sign-On. The secure access process is entirely seamless to the user. Even though CA Single Sign-On performs this process around 36 million times a day, user authentication takes only a matter of seconds.

Identity federation enables BT staff to access third-party applications and data hosted in the cloud. "Setting up federated identities was very simple using CA Single Sign-On," comments Cartwright. "Our employees can now access more than 50 services – including travel, HR and finance applications – using this federated approach."

Identify federation also enables customers to access services reliant on third-party applications hosted in the cloud – including an app that allows BT Sport subscribers to view content through a browser or smartphone.

Benefit

Decreased cost, increased
competitive advantage

By developing a secure and effective access model that is reusable across all products, BT can ensure a consistent experience for its users across all interfaces. As Cartwright confirms, "With CA Single Sign-On we can be confident that the security we defined for the browser is still enforced as we move into the app economy."

With developers now able to access 'ready-made' user authentication and authorisation services, new applications and customer services can be launched more quickly. "By establishing a standards-based reusable authentication capability, we have been able to reduce complexity and increase time-to-market," confirms Cartwright.

The solution has also improved efficiency for the company's 7,000 mobile engineers and 1,900 facilities management staff by enabling secure access to internal applications, such as job schedules, on a mobile device.

As well as enabling efficiency gains, the solution has delivered financial savings. For example, the decrease in password reset requests from staff and standardising on a single reusable solution has saved BT on average £4.5 million per annum.

"We have been able to make things simpler, cheaper and better for ourselves and our customers."

Alec Cartwright
Identity Services Architect, BT

BT's reusable authentication capability has helped to:

- Enhance the customer experience
- Boost competitive advantage
- Increase business agility.

"With CA Single Sign-On we have been able to make things simpler, cheaper and better for ourselves and our customers," comments Cartwright.

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