

CU SECURITY: BEYOND THE MOAT - COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY STRATEGIES

While information security professionals at financial institutions spend a great deal of time, effort and expense to keep unauthorized people out of their networks and systems, the fact remains that they need to let some individuals in to those online resources in order to conduct proper and efficient business-related activities. The challenge is to ensure that these end users - including employees, vendors and partners - are granted access only to those resources and specific data to which they are entitled.

While traditional passwords provided adequate, affordable security in an earlier era, password protection is woefully inadequate for today's networked world and can present a plethora of problems.

- * Poor security - Passwords are inherently insecure and undermine security in many ways. They are easily hacked or guessed, inviting network intrusions, creation of rogue accounts and the theft and abuse of online identities.
- * High costs - Providing password security on a per-application basis results in multiple accounts and passwords per user, driving up user administration costs, increasing helpdesk costs and decreasing productivity.
- * A frustrating user experience - People simply have too many passwords to manage. The need to authenticate to disparate applications creates an irritating, stop-and-go quality to the online experience that has been shown to drive users away.

Financial institutions both large and small can implement a strong two-factor authentication solution like RSA SecurID® to provide a highly reliable level of user authentication than reusable passwords. RSA SecurID is based on something you know (a password or PIN) and something you have (an authenticator), so you can be confident that the right people are accessing the right applications. More than 15 million people around the world confidently use RSA SecurID solutions to securely access VPN and remote access applications, web servers and applications, network operating systems, Microsoft desktops and more.

The reason that identity and access management solutions from RSA Security are so widely used is that more and more organizations both demand and require secure access to their systems and resources, and traditional methods just cannot provide this level of security and trust. In addition, identity theft, fraud and phishing attacks have become so rampant that financial institutions in particular are bearing the brunt of this problem. For instance, many studies have shown that the top reason consumers don't use online banking or bill payment is due to security concerns. This is where RSA Security provides added value and extensibility for its strong two-factor authentication solutions - to provide identity protection for consumers. These end users are commonly provided with RSA SecurID authenticators from their banks, credit unions and other financial institutions to secure access to their financial information and transactions from any computer connected to the Internet - or from other online client platforms such as kiosks, handheld devices or mobile phones.

Financial institutions that take the protection of identities and data very seriously should continue to adopt strong two-factor authentication technology, or begin evaluations in the near term. With the ease of use and integration, reduced password management for both the end user and help desk, and assured security, the time has come for all enterprises and organizations to take preventative measures, and not just reactive measures, for protecting their assets.



Jason Lewis is Vice President of Product Management and Marketing at RSA Security. He has more than ten years of high technology leadership and management experience, and in his current role, his responsibility is to define the market opportunity, develop the strategy and deliver the products that enable the RSA Security's customers to implement cost-effective, integrated identity and access management solutions. Jason has held a number of prior positions in his six years at RSA Security, including director of product management and marketing for RSA Security's web access management product line, as well as director of corporate development. In these roles, Jason helped lead the expansion of RSA Security's business into new products and markets, including new authentication and access management technologies.