SMSGlobal Gains Real-Time Visibility Into Customer Needs and System Health

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Executive summary

Founded in 2007, Melbourne, Australia-based SMSGlobal provides customizable web messaging solutions for small businesses as well as the world's best-known brands, banks, governments and airlines to engage internal and external stakeholders. As the market adapted to the increased use of mobile text messages, the company identified an immediate need to add more advanced features to its offerings. It also needed to boost its security posture and ensure compliance. Since deploying Splunk Enterprise and Splunk Enterprise Security (ES), SMSGlobal has seen benefits including:

- Real-time reporting and Operational Intelligence
- Optimized compliance management
- Intelligent prediction of customers' needs
- Automated threat intelligence

Why Splunk

Like other online merchants accepting credit card payments, SMSGlobal needs to comply with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard. Previously, the operational team found compliance reporting extremely time consuming. For example, in the past it took a team of 10 people a few days to trawl through audit and web logs just to compile a single report. The team also found information access cumbersome, as many applications were integrated with different devices—such as Cisco network devices and ASA appliances—and every system generated logs in different formats and locations, including operating system, application, network device, security system and virtualization platform.

Moreover, the company's latest business audit had shown the need for SMSGlobal to bring in a solid security information and event management solution to combat hacking and other emerging cyberthreats to better protect customer data.

In view of this, SMSGlobal decided to bring in a new platform to centrally manage both internal and external data in order to simplify audit reporting, boost security and enhance operational efficiency. After evaluating six products, the company concluded that Splunk Enterprise was the best option and started using it as a business analytics and security platform in September 2016.

Industry
- Online services

Splunk Use Cases
- Business analytics
- Security
- Compliance

Challenges
- Manual, time-consuming compliance procedures and investigations involving multiple teams
- Increased security challenges and cyberthreats
- Lack of predictive analytics restricted customer service functionality

Business Impact
- Optimized compliance management with reports generated in seconds instead of days
- Administrative staff time reduced tenfold due to real-time business visibility
- Heightened operational security with effective tracking of system anomalies and security breaches
- Maximized marketing effectiveness and customer loyalty due to intelligent customer behavior prediction

Data Sources
- Cisco network devices
- Cisco ASA appliances
- Windows logs
- Exchange logs
- System logs, including authentication and authorization logs, systems and data change logs, failure and critical error logs
- Virtual machine logs from VMWare hosts in virtualization environment
- Web and custom application programming interface

Splunk Products
- Splunk Enterprise
- Splunk Enterprise Security
- Splunk App for PCI Compliance
- Splunk App for Microsoft Exchange

"Splunk Enterprise was easy to implement and it's easy to use," says Paul McKenna, co-founder and chief operating officer, SMSGlobal. "The real surprise is that it not only meets all of our primary requirements but also delivers out-of-the-box functionality that demonstrates unexpected value, like real-time business visibility and predictive analytics."

Compliance reporting reduced from days to real time

As a scalable solution for machine-generated data, Splunk Enterprise collects, indexes and harnesses operational data across SMSGlobal's infrastructure; dashboards provide staff with in-depth, real-time visibility. Compliance reporting that was a painstaking task requiring 10 people and days to complete now is a simple job that takes only one administrator seconds to complete. Scheduled searches and automated reporting make it easy to provide compliance analysts and auditors with needed information.

After implementing the Splunk App for Microsoft Exchange, SMSGlobal has gained full visibility into its Microsoft Exchange environment. The installation was completed in no time, and the company can now monitor email movement across the entire IT infrastructure in real time. While it used to take days to correlate events from firewalls, Exchange or ad logs, such tasks now complete in minutes.

Real-time anomaly detection and health monitoring

With Splunk software, SMSGlobal also harnesses machine data to determine everything from operational health to infrastructure security posture. The company can now easily create action rules to identify anomalies and protect critical infrastructure from cyberthreats. By indexing audit trails across firewalls, applications and access control systems, and by setting alerting rules for searches, SMSGlobal can now automate security event monitoring. Alerts can send notifications via email, RSS, SMS or trigger

"Splunk Enterprise is a fantastic solution that transforms machine data into accessible, usable and actionable business insights in real time, enabling us to realize fast time to value. It took us by surprise by offering out-of-the-box functionality that enables us to turn big data into revenues."

**Paul McKenna,
Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer**
SMSGlobal

scripts for integration with existing monitoring consoles. This eases concerns about being hacked and helps ensure customers receive a great experience with the highest levels of service and security.

Responding to customer needs with customized services

By using Splunk software to analyze and predict customer behavior, SMSGlobal has gained tremendous opportunities to leverage its insight and market tailor-made services that can increase customer loyalty. For example, by analyzing customers' banking behaviors, SMSGlobal will know whether they are about to move or make a change to the service. The company can also analyze user behavior to optimize customer experiences, push suitable promotions and drive monetization, turning business insights into profitable action.

According to McKenna, SMSGlobal is pleased that Splunk Enterprise and Splunk ES are helping the company generate actionable insights into marketing campaigns and user engagement, helping it sharpen its competitive edge. The company is currently expanding its business into multiple international markets and implementing new technologies like virtualization. "Without any doubt, Splunk will continue to be a close partner in driving SMSGlobal's digital transformation," says McKenna.

Download Splunk for free or get started with the free cloud trial. Whether cloud, on-premises, or for large or small teams, Splunk has a deployment model that will fit your needs.

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