Online Supermarket Shuts Down Hackers and Data Thieves

and discovers how to convert web security from an expense into a revenue stream.

For many companies, maintaining web security is both challenging and costly. One company has found a way to deploy security that's not only robust and easy to use, it actually generates some revenue of its own.

Online megastore mySupermarket (www.mySupermarket.com) is a "new kind of supermarket" that allows shoppers to get the lowest possible prices on their groceries, health & beauty products, and other essential items from major retailers. With an international presence and millions of registered users, mySupermarket is a high-profile target for criminal hackers, data thieves, and other Internet attackers.

Constant Internet Attacks

"Every day we had at least 10-30 alerts for hacking and other attacks. There were constant attempts at infiltration," said Livne Niv, mySupermarket's Head of Operations and IT. "We could detect and, with a lot of work, block them. But this takes a lot of money for hardware and human resources, and a lot of effort to update our defenses against new forms of attack."

Along with direct attacks, mySupermarket also had problems with data theft. "Our main line of business is information," said Niv. For example, the company continuously updates its websites to reflect the latest prices on thousands of products from over a dozen major retailers.

This rich trove of data (along with years of price history) is a major competitive advantage for mySupermarket. As a result, it attracts persistent and sophisticated data thieves. Even some of the retailers that partner with mySupermarket were using bots to scrape the company's sites, in order to track the prices and products being offered by their competitors.

Unfortunately, conventional security solutions were unable to protect mySupermarket's data. Since modern scraper bots masquerade as legitimate users, conventional WAF/IPS systems have difficulty detecting them.

CASE STUDY
mySupermarket

INDUSTRY
Ecommerce and online shopping.

CHALLENGE
- Defending against a continual flow of attempted hacking and system breaches, averaging 10-30 per day.
- Stopping data theft and site scraping by competitors and aggregators. Conventional security solutions were ineffective at identifying and blocking the scraper bots.

SOLUTION
The IT team deployed Reblaze as an additional layer of protection above existing security solutions.

RESULTS
- Hacking attempts are now intercepted and eliminated. Would-be system intruders are blocked before they even reach the firewall.
- Data scraping bots are automatically identified and excluded from mySupermarket's websites.
- When attempted scraping occurs, mySupermarket can now identify and contact the organization. If it's not a competitor, mySupermarket offers to sell access to the data. Former data scrapers are now converted into paying customers.

A New Approach to Defeating Attackers

To bolster mySupermarket's defenses, the IT team began to investigate additional security solutions. They met with several companies, and chose one solution, but its implementation didn't go well. Then they heard of Reblaze.

Reblaze is a next-generation platform that provides comprehensive, robust web security. It deploys a virtual private cloud around the client's web assets, protecting them from all forms of web attacks: system intrusion, data theft and scraping, DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service), and more.

The mySupermarket team decided to test Reblaze, and they were impressed with how easy it was to implement. Unlike on-site hardware or software solutions, with Reblaze there's nothing to install.

As Niv explained, "They sent us several questions, we answered them, and they prepared the environment for us to test. We had our QA team test it and make sure all the functionality was there, and no issues were detected. From there, all we had to do to make it live was to change our DNS to point to Reblaze. And things have run smoothly ever since."

Immediate Results

Reblaze intercepts and defeats hostile web traffic before it even reaches the client's data center. Meanwhile, legitimate visitors have normal access to the website (and even experience accelerated performance from the site, thanks to Reblaze's CDN integration).

Thus, when the Reblaze platform was enabled for the mySupermarket websites, there was an immediate drop in hostile traffic. Attacks went from 10-30 attacks per day, down to roughly one per week. As Niv explained, "The attempts we still see on the system aren't related to Reblaze—they're reaching the system through other interfaces."

Results became even better as the mySupermarket team became more proficient with Reblaze. Niv commented, "There are so many features in the platform that there was a learning curve involved. But Reblaze is very helpful.

"Even when we didn't know how to do something, or when we wanted something that the platform wasn't configured to do, with the click of a button we were in contact with someone at Reblaze. They immediately understood what we needed, and as quick as that, would implement the change. There is always someone available to take your call 24x7," Niv said.

Making Web Security "Effortless"

One of the distinguishing features of Reblaze is that the platform is administered and maintained remotely by Reblaze's team of security experts, providing "effortless" web security for the client. Even as new web threats arise, countermeasures are deployed immediately and automatically across the network, with no action required from the client.

As Niv commented, "There's definitely much more peace of mind now. You know you have someone standing at the gate, watching over you."

In addition, Niv said, "We now have capabilities we didn't have before. In the past, to distinguish between legitimate users and hackers, we had to dig through logs and try to understand user activity. Now with Reblaze we have this portal that's easy to use, and all the info is right there in front of you. Today it's straightforward; you can see which users get through and which ones get blocked. You can see where all your traffic originates from, and what it's doing.

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"In fact, we've had several occasions where there was something going on in the site that we weren't paying attention to, and Reblaze engineers contacted us about it. They would say things like, 'You have unusual traffic coming from Russia, do you have any customers there? The system is blocking it, and we just wanted to make sure it should be.' Again, there's real peace of mind now."

Niv also commented on Reblaze's fine-grained traffic control, which allows the user to allow or deny access to visitors based on their behavior, city, country, network, and more—and it's all done automatically.

"The system has this auto-ban feature. It can detect what looks like strange user behavior—something different from a normal user—and it pops out the IP address. If you agree, it blocks it for a specific time that you've defined in advance. That's a wonderful feature," Niv said.

Making Web Security Lucrative

In addition to defeating internet attacks, Reblaze has allowed mySupermarket to turn web security from an expense into a revenue stream.

Niv explained, "Reblaze's advanced human recognition algorithms allow us to block all the bots that used to crawl our sites—even the most sophisticated ones that masquerade as humans. We still allow good bots (like those from Google and other search engines), but now all the rest that used to scrape our sites can't get our data anymore.

"Now, when we see somebody trying to crawl our site, after we block them we contact them and say: 'We see that you're interested in our data. We can provide it to you at an affordable price.' Now we can control which organizations get our data, and we can control which data they get.

"Reblaze allows us to do more than just block attackers. Now we're converting data scrapers into paying customers."

More Than Just a Security Solution

When asked if he had any final comments, Niv replied, "Please stress the way that Reblaze's people work to serve you. The Reblaze team doesn't sit passively, waiting for us to move the wheels. They not only contact us with updates like new security rules and so on, they also initiate conversations and offer us new ideas.

"It's obvious that our success is very important to them, and I really appreciate that."

About mySupermarket

With a network of international websites and over 2.9 million registered users, mySupermarket allows shoppers to compare prices and shop online from some of the world's largest retailers, including Tesco, Sainsbury's, and Morrisons in the U.K., and Amazon, Walmart, Target, and Costco in the U.S. Shoppers can get vouchers and coupons, "savvy buy" price alerts when their favorite products are offered at steep discounts, and more. **Learn more at www.mySupermarket.com (in the U.S.) or www.mySupermarket.co.uk (in the U.K.).**

About Reblaze

Reblaze offers next-generation web security technologies which work for any web platform, at any scale: a cloud-based, comprehensive, adaptive and robust protective shield for your web assets. With 24x7 protection that updates automatically as new web threats arise, Reblaze provides "effortless" web security. **Learn more at www.Reblaze.com.**

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