

Brother Secures Employee Access and Reduces Costs with Cloud-based Authentication

Known for its sewing machines and printing solutions, the Brother Group secures access to its 24-hour IT support systems with cloud-based Thales SafeNet Trusted Access (formerly Gemalto SafeNet Authentication Service Cloud Edition). As a result, the company has experienced large-scale cost savings, reduced management loads, and guaranteed security of its core systems.

The Organization

Brother Industries Ltd. began with manufacturing and selling household sewing machines. Today, the company has locations in more than 40 countries, and sewing machines (including household and industrial machines) account for only 11 percent of sales, with approximately 70 percent from printing solutions, such as multifunction printers/fax machines.

The Business Need: Secure Remote Access

Brother Industries Ltd. has entrusted its information systems support to ABeam Consulting for many years. Together, they established a 24-hour support system comprised of approximately 30 staff, all equipped with secure computers for home use so systems could be accessed around the clock to maintain a high level of security.

The computers were equipped with identity checks, fingerprint authentication, and a troubleshooting system.

However, as end of support for Windows XP approached, Brother and ABeam Consulting had to examine other options, such as switching to Windows 7. Ultimately, they decided to replace users' computers with a thin client so that sensitive information would not be stored locally on PCs. At the same time, a switch to newer biometric authentication systems was examined. However, fingerprint authentication scanners were inconsistent so support technicians were sometimes unable to log into the system, which led to high help desk overhead. Brother needed an authentication solution that could guarantee high levels of security while also being low cost, easy to manage, and simple to use.

brother
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Challenge:

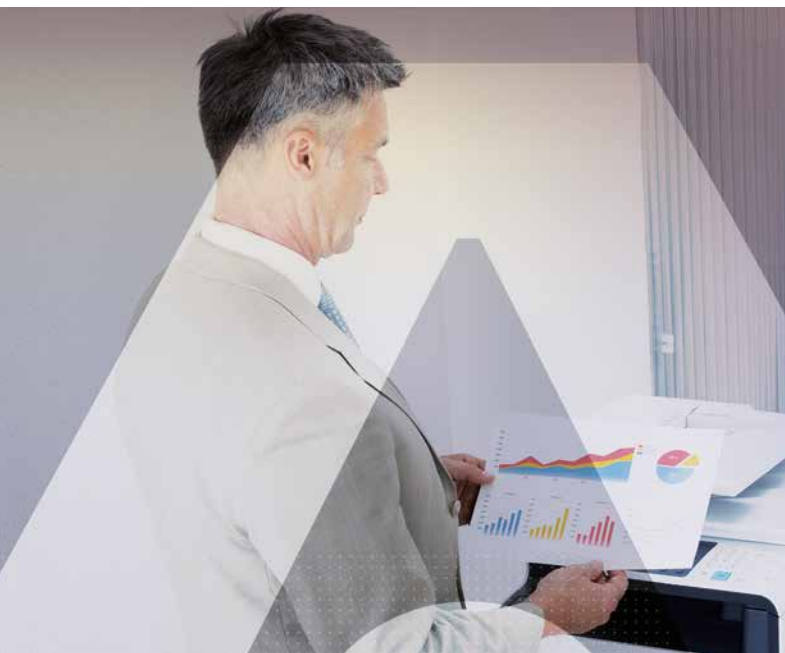
To enable secure remote access for the 24/7 support team, Brother required a cost-effective, agile authentication solution.

Solution:

Thales SafeNet Trusted Access (STA) verifies identities with cloud-based authentication and SMS one time password authentication.

Benefit:

Team members can log in easily and securely, and Brother reduced operational costs by 40% by moving to a cloud based solution.



The Solution: Cloud-based Authentication with SMS One-Time Password

Examination of the thin client and new authentication systems was started in September 2012. Brother chose T4U 2X as their thin client, which has a good balance between cost and function, and was already being used by other departments. To control access to the terminals, Brother evaluated a variety of two-factor authentication solutions, including traditional hardware tokens and SMS authentication. Hardware tokens were examined but rejected due to the cost of hardware, hassle to users, and the need to replace lost tokens. Ultimately, Brother chose the Thales SafeNet Trusted Access (STA) one-time-password solution, a cloud-based method that authenticates by sending a one-time password to the user's mobile phone.

"Everyone has a cell phone, and we determined this to be both highly safe and simple because a password can be sent to a pre-registered email address," said Shigeru Mizuno, Planning and Information Group 1 Manager, Strategic Promotion Department of Brother Industries." Also, because the one-time password service is cloud-based, there is no need to set up a server, and startup is easy."

After two months of testing, Brother and ABeam moved the 30 support technicians to SafeNet Trusted Access. SafeNet Trusted Access makes strong authentication easy, offering flexibility to support all types of mobile phones and scalability to easily add users. SafeNet Trusted Access also provides completely automated processes and management functions, as well as customization, to allow for a seamless and comfortable user experience.

The Benefits: 40% Cost Reduction

Adoption of the new system resulted in large-scale cost reductions, as well as reduced operational requirements and expenses—approximately 40 percent savings. The simplicity of the login experience was well-received by the users, who appreciated the easy, reliable SMS authentication process. "Previously, we paid maintenance costs for the fingerprint authentication systems, as well as various operational burdens associated with the computers, such as added disk space, replacement of machines, and software and operating system updates. With the combination of the 2X thin client plus SafeNet Authentication Service, these costs have been rendered unnecessary, which is a great benefit. We believe that the new cost is roughly 60 percent of the previous system," said Mr. Mizuno.

While previous fingerprint scanners were temperamental, causing frustration and preventing users from logging into the system, the Thales one-time password solution using a cell phone and the simple, easy-to-understand operation has been favorably accepted.

"With the combination of the 2X thin client plus SafeNet Authentication Service, we have eliminated many hardware and operational costs. We believe that the new cost is roughly 60 percent of the previous system."

— Shigeru Mizuno, Planning and Information Group 1 Manager, Strategic Promotion Department of Brother Industries.

With the thin client, when system updates are necessary, all user environments are updated with one operation on the server side, which considerably reduces management operations. Also, Brother was able to integrate their existing VPN environment with SafeNet Trusted Access and the 2X thin client, reducing costs even further. Mr. Mizuno believes that "the results are above and beyond what we initially expected." Because of the resulting cost savings, reduced operating loads and simple, easy-to-understand operation, the system is now being examined for overseas expansion.

"Until now, support for overseas manufacturing and sales bases was conducted from Japan. However, if we use this system, we can entrust support duties to A Beam Consulting's overseas operation bases. We believe this can be handled locally. In the past, it was necessary to construct large-scale systems to ensure security over dedicated communication lines. However, with the thin client and Gemalto authentication, we are assured that our data remains secure," said Mr. Mizuno.

About Thales's SafeNet Access Management and Authentication Solutions

Thales's industry-leading Access Management and Authentication solutions let enterprises centrally manage and secure access to enterprise IT, web and cloud-based applications. Utilizing policy-based SSO and universal authentication methods, enterprises can effectively prevent breaches, migrate to the cloud securely and simplify regulatory compliance.

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