

Data-Safety Comes First for Getronics

Blue/Surveys provides a secure, online solution for collecting sensitive information

by Angie Gallop, eXplore

Confidentiality is critical for Getronics, one of the world's top IT security service firms.

Client: IT services firm Getronics, with 24,000 employees and revenue of \$3+ billion.

Challenge: Collecting and analyzing detailed surveys the old-fashioned way, with spreadsheets, was too slow.

Solution: Blue/Surveys, a secure and flexible online system that integrates directly with Getronics' database and authentication store.

Benefits:

- Fast and easy online surveys
- Assured confidentiality of data
- Tremendous time savings
- Quick, easy implementation
- Automatic reminders that ease the workload for consultants
- Next to no maintenance

“Disclosure is not an option for us,” says Nicholas Brigman, Getronics marketing director. “The surveys and polls that we do are extremely sensitive.”

With 24,000 employees around the world and revenues topping \$3 billion, Getronics offers a full spectrum of IT services. Security is one of its main five divisions.

Getronics fights the battle against hackers and corporate spies by doing the following:

- ◆ offering online security courses;
- ◆ managing the International Information Integrity Institute (I-4®) where security executives share their knowledge;
- ◆ maintaining a database of security benchmarks to help companies see how their efforts compare.

Surveys are one of the main tools that Getronics uses to evaluate its success and keep its benchmarks database up-to-date.



To help fight the growing threat from hackers and corporate spies, Getronics sends out regular surveys to compile a database of security benchmarks in various sectors.

When the company started looking for a simple, yet highly secure online survey application, it found everything it needed with Blue/Surveys from eXplorance.

Manual data collection too much of a time-waster

Getronics' security surveys are very demanding, often clocking in at hundreds of questions each.

Since all this information is highly sensitive, "we were concerned that data collection was stuck in a 1970s-80s approach," says Senior Security Consultant Russell Hailey.

"Clients filled in spreadsheets, so it was a very manual process. Putting the data together, creating graphs, analyzing the data, and writing reports were all manual processes."

Also, clients were asking for an online survey — something competitors were already doing.

Getronics needed a system that would feed directly into its database, so consultants could collect, store, and graph the data with the push of a few buttons.

Hailey looked at almost 30 tools before selecting Blue/Surveys from eXplorance. Blue/Surveys is a Web-based survey creation, management, and analysis system.

Tight integration means tight security

One of Blue's key strengths is that it's easy to integrate into a company's current system, including its authentication source.

"We couldn't have the data residing in someone else's data store, we needed it on-site," says Aaron Fiskum, Getronics' Web services team leader.

"The ability to have Blue on the premises using our own security and authentication methods makes us feel much more confident about the safety of this data."

Blue integrates perfectly with the company's domains and Active Directory.

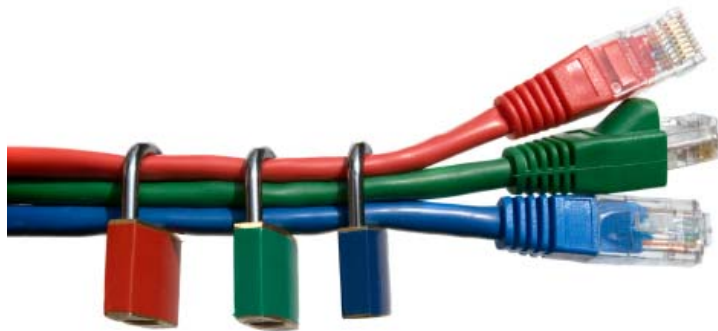
This means Hailey can now allow extranet users, like members of I-4, to have accounts, answer surveys online, and administer surveys at large with sign-in protocols that keep everything secure.

Better productivity

Beyond automating the data collection and analysis process, the new system also includes an automatic reminder function.

Hailey says this has proven to be a major time-saver. Before Blue, the company's highly paid consultants were making reminder phone calls and sending e-mails.

"I've calculated that I can do at least three times the work that I used to do," says Hailey.



"It used to be difficult to focus on more than one project at a time, because the care and feeding of the survey process could drag out to at least a month.

"Now the survey tool takes care of all of that."

A new approach to marketing

In an unexpected side benefit, the new system has also led to a whole new marketing approach.

Since consultants no longer need to do so many manual processes, the company can now offer free surveys to prospects, and deliver sample mini-reports one day later.

"This tool not only makes our current processes more efficient, but it also allows us to provide a valuable service up-front to potential clients so they can understand the power of what we do," says Hailey.

No-headache maintenance and ease-of-use

From an IT perspective, Fiskum is also very happy with Blue.

"We've had hardly any maintenance at all, it's pretty much self-automated and it seems to be a great, solid system," he says.

The whole team is comfortable with Blue's simple interface, which makes it quick to get people up and running.

For example, Hailey says it takes him less than five minutes to set up a custom Web survey with the same look and feel as a client's other online materials. And even though they're quick to produce, the company's surveys always look very professional.

"We did a little mock-up for a project bid, and the company was blown away," he says.

"We have to establish trust that our surveys are part of a legitimate data-collection process," he notes, "and not just somebody phishing for information."

Thanks to Blue/Surveys, Getronics now has an efficient data collection system that its clients can trust, so that everyone can get on with the important business of improving security.