

Grupo Financiero Banorte Banks on Attachmate Reflection

Gives 700 branches secure web-to-host access

Grupo Financiero Banorte calls itself “The Strong Bank of Mexico” for a good reason. After years of mergers and acquisitions, the 100-year-old company holds fifth place among Mexico’s financial institutions in total assets. It has 10,000 employees, nearly 1,200 branches, and competes successfully against multinational consortiums.

But last year, a new acquisition revealed a serious IT problem: Branch bank employees did not have secure Internet access to corporate information. Banorte solved the problem by replacing a random mix of obsolete host access products with Reflection® for the Web.

One Product, Standardized Access

In the wake of the acquisition, Banorte’s technical support department was saddled with managing an assortment of terminal emulators that failed to meet current security standards. So the department set out to standardize host access across the board.

Experts from different areas—including systems, technical support, systems security, and quality control—tested myriad terminal emulators. Ultimately, they chose Reflection for the Web. They also employed Inffinix Conectividad, Attachmate’s longtime reseller in Mexico and Latin America, to help get Reflection up and running.

Easily installed on any web server and downloaded to the desktop browser on demand, Reflection for the Web gives local and remote users access to IBM mainframe, AS/400, HP, UNIX, and OpenVMS hosts. Its fully integrated Java client and proxy server provide uncompromised security, including data encryption and user authentication. Together, the Java client and proxy server shield mission-critical host information from spies, hackers, and other known security threats.

Up and Running in Just One Week

For the initial installation, Banorte’s technical support team wanted to connect branch bank users to treasury management and control applications residing on an HP-UX host in Banorte’s brokerage division.

In just one week, employees at 700 branches were safely accessing the assigned brokerage applications over the Internet. “Implementation was quick and successful,” said Salvador Sierra Hernández, Banorte’s assistant director of technical support. “It was easy to customize Reflection for the Web to meet our needs. And because we didn’t have to physically install the client components on each terminal, we saved considerable time and money.”

Reflection for the Web supports open standards (including Java, SSL, and LDAP), so there were no problems integrating terminal sessions with Banorte’s intranet portal. Users simply click a web link to connect directly to the target host application. Behind the scenes, a Java applet is downloaded from the web server to the browser. Once downloaded, the applet connects directly to the host application, without going back through the server.

QUICK VIEW

Problem

Branch bank employees did not have secure Internet access to corporate information.

Solution

Replaced a random mix of obsolete host access products with Reflection for the Web.

Results

- One product for local and remote users.
- Uncompromised security, including data encryption and user authentication.
- Centralized management control over host sessions.
- Personalized sessions for users.

The applet contains only the specific functions required by each user, minimizing the footprint on the desktop. Upgrades are automatically deployed each time the user accesses the host application. The entire download and upgrade process takes seconds. Users aren’t even aware that it’s happening.

Ironclad Security, Centralized Control

Security is the biggest obstacle facing organizations that need to extend their host systems to the web, and Banorte was no exception. The technical support team wanted to give special protection to the UNIX server running the brokerage applications.

To that end, they used a Reflection for the Web proxy server feature—Secure Token Authorization—to avoid the hassles and risks associated with deploying SSL client certificates to every remote user. Now, digitally signed tokens are deployed to authorized users by the Reflection management server when a secure session is loaded. This ensures that only authorized users can connect to the host system.

With Reflection for the Web, administrators have complete control over which emulation sessions a user or group can access. They

can also create personalized sessions for users from any location, at the corporate office or branch level, which greatly simplifies management. "Any configuration changes made at the corporate office are automatically reflected in all sessions," said Sierra Hernández. "Now we have everything centralized in the same place—the intranet."

The Rollout Continues

Sierra Hernández has ongoing plans for Reflection for the Web. With the help of Inffinix Conectividad, he intends to roll the product out to all remaining branch banks, and eventually to affiliated businesses.

"Reflection for the Web has become the centerpiece of our information technology and a strategic tool for expanding our services," he said. "We wanted the best and we found it in Reflection for the Web."

REFLECTION FOR THE WEB SECURITY OPTIONS
Triple DES encryption
Secure token authorization
LDAP/Active Directory authentication
Support for existing security policies and VPNs
Multiple host connections through one security proxy port
Support for SOCKS V4
A usage log of all connections



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