

# CORE IMPACT CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

## SOLUTION SUMMARY

**CUSTOMER TYPE** | Europe's leading travel and leisure website.

**CHALLENGE** | Secure customer credit card information under the PCI Data Security Standard.

**SOLUTION** | CORE IMPACT, the first comprehensive penetration testing solution for assessing specific information security threats to an organization.

## THE COMPANY

**lastminute.com**  
Travel and Leisure

**lastminute.com**

lastminute.com, a Travelocity company, is Europe's leading independent online travel and leisure group. The company's websites provide customers in 14 countries with access to airline tickets, hotel rooms, holidays, car hire, entertainment tickets, restaurant reservations gifts and auctions. The company also owns and operates online brands including holidayautos.com, traveolcity.co.uk, resfeber.com, travelprice.com, travelselect.com and exhilaration.

## THE CHALLENGE

While lastminute.com serves as the online gateway to fun and adventure for millions of customers worldwide, there's one thing the company doesn't take lightly: information security. In fact, each of the company's global websites promises its customers that "any data you transfer through lastminute.com will be completely safe from prying eyes." As chief architect and security officer for lastminute.com, Matt Hobbs is responsible for ensuring that the company can stand by this promise.

Like all credit card merchants, lastminute.com is required to ensure and validate the security of its network under the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standard supported by all major credit card issuers.

Under the PCI Standard, lastminute.com is required to implement data security measures that include penetration testing. Specifically, Requirement 11.3 calls for network penetration testing to be performed "on network infrastructure and applications at least once a year and after any significant infrastructure or application upgrade or modification (e.g., operating system upgrade, sub-network added to the environment, web server added to the environment) ..."

## THE SOLUTION

To protect lastminute.com's customer information while complying with the PCI standard, Hobbs and his team traditionally performed internal security evaluations using an open source penetration testing solution and a complement of vulnerability scanners. However, as the company expanded its infrastructure to support the growth of its websites, they found it increasingly difficult to pinpoint demonstrable security threats using their existing in-house tools. While external consultants could help to pick up where these tools left off, Hobbs wanted his team to have the freedom to independently analyze threats. "We really needed a professional-strength solution that could help us locate and prove specific threats - where and when we wanted," he commented, continuing, "We also wanted stronger reporting capabilities - both to assist with ongoing remediation and to support annual compliance audits."

"Upon considering our options, it was clear that CORE IMPACT was the only choice," stated Hobbs. The product now enables his team to test for network vulnerabilities, identify what resources are exposed and determine if their security investments are effectively detecting and preventing attacks on customer data.

## THE RESULT

### **Direct Compliance with PCI Standard Requirement 11.3**

By using CORE IMPACT to perform network penetration testing on a regular basis, as well as after infrastructure and application updates, lastminute.com is able to directly comply with Requirement 11.3 of the PCI Standard. "We run CORE IMPACT whenever we publish a new version of our website, which is about every four to six weeks," stated Hobbs, adding "And now that we've automated our penetration testing, we're able to assess our security posture across over 2,500 servers - without over-extending our IT staff."

### Added Security for Other PCI Compliance Efforts

By performing automated penetration testing with CORE IMPACT, lastminute.com can independently test - and prove the existence of - network weaknesses. In doing so, they also bolster compliance efforts across a number of other PCI Requirements, including:

- **Requirement 6.1: Ensure that all system components and software have the latest vendor-supplied security patches ...**

Hobbs' team uses CORE IMPACT to test the effectiveness of every patch they install using the same attacks the patches are designed to stop.

- **Requirement 6.2: Establish a process to identify newly discovered security vulnerabilities ... Update standards to address new vulnerability issues.**

While lastminute.com regularly performs vulnerability scans to identify potential network weaknesses, penetration testing enables them to take this a step further. With CORE IMPACT, Hobbs' team effectively distinguishes real vulnerabilities from false positives, allowing them to focus their remediation efforts on actual threats.

- **Requirement 11.1: Test security controls, limitations, network connections, and restrictions annually to assure the ability to adequately identify and to stop any unauthorized access attempts ...**

Using CORE IMPACT, lastminute.com is able to independently determine if attackers can actually exploit network vulnerabilities - with full control over the assessment process. "If we wanted to, we could test our network nightly. We can even target specific applications and servers on an ad-hoc basis," Hobbs stated.

- **Requirement 11.4: Use network intrusion detection systems, host-based intrusion detection systems, and intrusion prevention systems to monitor all network traffic and alert personnel to suspected compromises. Keep all intrusion detection and prevention engines up-to-date.**

CORE IMPACT enables lastminute.com to continually test the effectiveness of their IDS, IPS and other defensive technologies, alerting them to systems that may require new attack signatures and other updates.

### Increased Preparation for PCI Audits

CORE IMPACT backs every lastminute.com penetration test with documentation of targeted networks and hosts, audits of all exploits performed, and details about proven vulnerabilities. The reports serve both to assist with remediation efforts and to provide proof of testing to PCI auditors. "We now have a foundation in place for documenting our vulnerability assessment and remediation initiatives throughout the year, making the annual auditing process easy and smooth," stated Hobbs.

### Decreased Network - and Company - Downtime

Prior to using CORE IMPACT, penetration testing at lastminute.com often required Hobbs' team to take servers out of production and arrange for network downtime. "We know we can trust the product's exploits and with CORE IMPACT the whole testing process is very discreet and stable," Hobbs said. With CORE IMPACT, lastminute.com gets Commercial-Grade Exploits, which undergo a rigorous, in-house development and testing process and are guaranteed to be safe. He added, "On the flip side, by avoiding data breaches, we're not only preventing downtime for our network, but also for my team - and the entire company as whole."

### Compliance with Both the Letter and the Spirit of the PCI Standard

Hobbs knows that basic compliance with industry standards alone doesn't necessarily guarantee network security.

"While it's nice to know that we're compliant with regulations, it's much more important for us to deliver on our promise to ensure information security for our customers," Hobbs stated, continuing, "Fortunately, CORE IMPACT helps us to both comply with the PCI Standard and honor our commitment to keep customer data safe."