

# Lufthansa Crew Remote Access

RSA SecurID® provides Lufthansa's crew members with secure, easy access to essential flight information



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Werner Bieske  
Information & Communications Manager  
Lufthansa

Lufthansa's 15,000 flight personnel require access to detailed, sensitive information before each flight. Up until 1997, this was provided in paper form in restricted access areas at airports or via terminals from Lufthansa's own offices. Lufthansa embraced the latest communications technology and partnered with CompuServe, UUnet, Lufthansa Systems and RSA Security to establish a Web site, protected from unauthorized access, for its flight crews — Lufthansa Crew Remote Access.

## Administrative Headache

Organizing flight information for its 15,000 crew members (pilots, engineers and cabin staff) serving 323 destinations in 89 countries, proved a major administrative headache for Lufthansa. In turn, the way the flight personnel obtained the information was rather cumbersome — they had to go to restricted-access rooms within an airport where the information was available either in paper form or via flight operation terminals. The relatively large number of employees compared to the relatively small number of access points made the process inefficient and time-consuming, and meant that mistakes could easily be made.

To address this challenge, Werner Bieske, Information & Communications Manager at Lufthansa, and his colleague Helmuth Eggeling, Crew Management Systems Manager, took a strategic look at the possibilities offered by new media. Their objective was to improve information flow on a worldwide basis and provide Lufthansa's mobile workforce with as much information as possible in the most easy-to-use manner.

## Security is Paramount

Aside from the financial and technical considerations, which are obviously important when embarking on a project like this, the issue of security was paramount. Scare stories about hacking abound — for instance research undertaken by the FBI and the Computer Security Institute in the U.S. showed that in 1998 over \$137 million was lost as a result of damages caused by hacking, and that Internet access points were where corporate networks were most vulnerable. This study concluded that, in the face of no clear international laws governing the Internet, companies must take matters into their own hands and ensure their networks are secure by taking advantage of the latest security solutions available.

Taking all this into consideration, Helmuth Eggeling and Werner Bieske initiated the Lufthansa Crew Remote Access project with two key partners: network and data security solutions provider RSA Security and Internet service provider CompuServe.

Lufthansa with the assistance of CompuServe designed a closed Web site, or extranet, for the crew members. The site contains all the pre-flight information required, including flight plans, schedules, crew lists and other relevant documentation and advice, as well as part of the Lufthansa company intranet providing news, library and chat facilities. Recent enhancements to the site provide an interactive facility for pilots to make requests about their schedules.

## About Lufthansa

Lufthansa is a commercial passenger airline employing approximately 28,000 staff worldwide. Lufthansa currently serves some 323 destinations in 89 countries and in 1998 carried more than 36 million passengers. Lufthansa is the largest company of the Deutsche Lufthansa AG group, which produced record pre-tax profits in 1998 of DM 2,482 million.

As all this data is clearly of a very sensitive nature, it was essential to ensure that only authorized personnel obtained access to the site. If flight information were to be compromised it would not only be extremely embarrassing for Lufthansa, but if, for instance, someone with malicious intentions were to obtain information on which pilot or flight attendant would be en route to Singapore at any given time, the consequences would be disastrous.

### The Answer: Two-factor Authentication

Against this background, Lufthansa chose to work with RSA Security, impressed by the company's experience and proven RSA SecurID® authentication technology which enables 7 million users to conduct business securely across the globe.

Lufthansa's flight personnel were issued with RSA SecurID key fob authenticators, and can access the Crew Remote Access Web site from any PC with Virtual Private Network (VPN) access. Upon logon, they are prompted for the security passcode (newly generated every 60 seconds) currently displayed on their RSA SecurID authenticator. When the code is entered alongside the user's PIN and password, and is in turn authenticated by the RSA ACE/Server® on the Lufthansa premises, it provides virtually crack-proof, two-factor user authentication. The RSA ACE/Server also centrally manages and administers user profiles and maintains a comprehensive audit trail that records all access attempts.

"Our employees can now access the information anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day," enthuses Werner Bieske, "The system is very stable and has never been compro-

mised, so we will now gradually dispense with the old printed material system."

"The system is very easy to both access and use, as well as saving time all-round. The ability to get accurate, up-to-date information from home or on the move makes flight preparations more manageable and relaxed. This in turn leads to improved customer service. From the company's point of view, Lufthansa can guarantee that the right person gets the right information at the right time whilst alleviating the administrative workload. In addition, overhead can be reduced since there is no longer any need to provide flight personnel PCs, offices, parking spaces, etc. at Lufthansa offices. There are currently nearly 4000 users, and this is likely to double within the year — at this level real savings can be realized."

### Award-winning Solution

In September 1998, the Lufthansa Crew Remote Access project was recognized at the COMDEX Enterprise Frankfurt trade show as "Most Innovative Web Site". The exhibition is one of COMDEX' worldwide events and the award was bestowed by an international jury whose criteria included ease of use and innovative content.

### Plans for the future

After the success of this project other Lufthansa divisions, such as Lufthansa Cargo, and even other airlines have shown interest in using this remote access solution. "Once all the security aspects have been addressed, the possibilities for this application are endless!" conclude Werner Bieske and his team.



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