



Securing the Enterprise

Banque NSMD

QualysGuard Case Study / Financial Services



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Raphaël Marchand
Security Architect

At a Glance

Company:

Group Member of ABN-AMRO, whose total assets exceed \$600 billion

Location:

Headquarters in Paris, France

Systems Scanned:

Service providers' Web servers and e-mail servers

Chief Benefits:

- Improved quality of service for global customers
- Rapid detection of vulnerabilities
- Immediate access to tested remedies to resolve vulnerabilities
- Easy-to-use interface
- Easy-to-interpret audit reports



membre du groupe  ABN-AMRO

Top Ten European Bank Protects Clients' Online Banking Privacy With QualysGuard Automated Vulnerability Assessment

A prominent international financial institution whose origins go back to 1824, ABN-AMRO ranks as one of the top ten banks in Europe and the top twenty worldwide. Its French affiliate, Banque de Neuflyze, Schlumberger, Mallet, Demachy, is a group member that provides banking services for commercial and consumer clients, wholesale corporations, and high net-worth individuals and institutional investors. Banque NSMD recently began offering online banking, outsourcing the Web-based services to more than a dozen different service providers. Its distributed operations drove the need for a simple solution for auditing network security.

“As a financial services provider, we have very strict security requirements,” says Raphaël Marchand, Security Architect of Banque NSMD. “Therefore, we continually re-evaluate our processes and audit methods to ensure we’re providing optimum security.” A key strategy is conducting regular, automated vulnerability audits of approximately fifteen outside service providers’ Web servers and mail servers, with QualysGuard Automated Vulnerability Assessment.

Eliminates Vulnerabilities Before They Are Exploited

Until early 2001, Banque NSMD relied on an assortment of procedures to check the security of each of its outsourced Web sites. These included intrusion detection (IDS) and the use of security consultants. The “piecemeal approach to network security,” as Marchand describes it, had drawbacks. For one, it was difficult to generate consistent reports. For another, though Banque NSMD and its service providers painstakingly followed procedures, these measures did not adequately protect against security breaches. This became obvious when one of the outsourced Web sites was changed accidentally from the secure HTTPS protocol to insecure HTTP, and the IDS reported unauthorized activity. “After this incident, we recognized that our service providers cannot guarantee security,” says Marchand. “We needed a more structured, comprehensive approach to network security. So we decided to take a proactive stance by detecting and correcting network vulnerabilities before incidents occurred, instead of discovering them after the fact.”

Banque NSMD resolved to conduct regular vulnerability assessments of its service providers’ Web servers and mail servers. This would include controlling and checking patches and updates as well as identifying new vulnerabilities introduced when configurations were changed. “The task was immense because we needed to monitor not one, but fifteen sites,” says Marchand.

QualysGuard Platform:
*Automated Network
Vulnerability Identification,
Elimination, and Verification*

QualysGuard is the first scalable, affordable Web service designed for companies of every size to audit network vulnerabilities. Delivered over the Internet, QualysGuard employs advanced vulnerability detection techniques, with its proprietary Inference-Based Engine, to assess a network's security exposures and suggest remedies before intruders can take advantage of them.

"QualysGuard enables us to save considerable time and resources performing a business-critical task, so we can deliver improved customer service."

Raphaël Marchand
Security Architect



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Responds Instantly and Comprehensively

After evaluating leading Automated Vulnerability Assessment solutions, Banque NSMD selected QualysGuard. "QualysGuard offers unique advantages in terms of responsiveness and audit thoroughness," says Marchand. Another advantage of QualysGuard for Banque NSMD was the security expertise of the Qualys staff. Qualys' in-house security experts constantly research new vulnerabilities—discovered at the average rate of 30 per week—as well as remedies. As a result, the bank has the assurance that its Internet-facing servers are scanned against the latest vulnerabilities, which are contained in the QualysGuard KnowledgeBase, a comprehensive database containing nearly two thousand known vulnerabilities. "Qualys security specialists work closely with our own teams, so we receive information about newly emerging vulnerabilities in near real-time, much earlier than we would from vendors who learn second-hand," says Marchand.

Saves Time and Resources by Automating Detection and Resolution

To begin using QualysGuard, Banque NSMD simply submitted to Qualys the IP addresses of the devices it wanted to scan. Qualys, in turn, provided a user name and password that the bank can use from any Web browser. Now Banque NSMD uses QualysGuard to conduct regular vulnerability audits of all hosted services. Immediately after each scan, Banque NSMD receives a detailed report by e-mail that identifies vulnerabilities, ranks them by severity level, and provides links to tested remedies. When a vulnerability is reported and the bank applies the recommended remedy, it conducts another scan on-demand to confirm that the vulnerability is resolved. The company can conduct an unlimited number of scans for a single annual subscription price.

The Web-based interface is simple and required no special training to use. "Qualys very quickly customized the look and feel of the interface to meet our requirements," says Marchand. "We couldn't have customized the interface so rapidly had not Qualys developed its own proprietary platform."

Delivers Tailored Reports Suiting Both Technical and Business Users

Flexible reporting options in QualysGuard have been especially useful for Banque NSMD. "The mission of our department is not only to establish security procedures and provide the appropriate tools, but to create reports that are appropriate for different audiences," says Marchand. For example, the computing team receives detailed reports that list all vulnerabilities, their security levels, and appropriate remedies. General managers, in contrast, are generally not interested in technical detail. Instead, they receive summaries and trend analysis, in easy-to-interpret, color graphics. "We particularly appreciate the flexibility and simplicity of QualysGuard reports: detailed and complete overviews for our network security engineers, and graphic trend overviews for our decision-makers," says Marchand.

Provides Improved Security and Customer Service

Financial services companies are key targets for network attacks, and QualysGuard helps Banque NSMD protect its network and at the same time improve customer service levels. "QualysGuard gives us a competitive edge in two ways," says Marchand. "First, it scans against the most comprehensive database of vulnerabilities, ensuring the best protection. Second, it provides verified remedies immediately following each scan. Everything is simple and automatic. In short, QualysGuard enables us to save considerable time and resources performing a business-critical task, so we can deliver improved customer service."