

S/MIME with external partners

Our customer relies on the Secardeo certBox for the end-to-end encryption of e-mails with external partners.

Our customer

Our customer is a globally leading listed technology group focusing on the areas of electrification, automation and digitalization and employs several hundred thousand people worldwide.



Challenges and goals

Our customer is one of the first enterprises that has successfully developed a user-oriented, globally acting public key infrastructure (PKI) which has been put into operation in the end of the 1990s. A major application is the usage of end-to-end encryption of e-mails using MS Outlook and S/MIME. This is, for many years now, the proven way to exchange sensitive data within the enterprise. Our customer soon recognized, that also the encryption with external partners is urgently needed, especially to protect business secrets from industrial espionage. For this, the X.509 encryption certificates of the partners have to be provided mutually. Practical experiences have shown that a user is overwhelmed soon and that a manual key exchange in large groups is not feasible. For this, an automated solution has been looked for.

Requirements

The solution should provide internal certificates to external partners (Inbound Encryption) and also retrieve external certificates to the internal client (Outbound Encryption).

The publication of internal certificates should be done with a maximum level of security in order to prevent from collecting e-

mail addresses (address harvesting) or from deriving information about the internal IT infrastructure. The search operation for external certificates should comprise as many certificate directories as possible and an option to upload certificates by partners should be provided as an alternative. The solution must be highly performant and available in order to enable several million search operations per month.

The solution

As early as in 2008 our customer made a decision for the Secardeo certBox. It offers path-leading, patented mechanisms for the reliable publication and retrieval of encryption certificates. Standard clients like Outlook are connected via LDAP and a manual certificate search is possible using web forms.

“We are experiencing an increasing use of encrypted e-mails with our business partners. By this, we are further expanding the highest security standard for the exchanged business information.”

PKI Manager

The internal user may encrypt to millions of recipients with certificates or even to Secure E-Mail Gateways simply by clicking the “Encrypt” button – exactly as for encrypting the internal communication.

As an option the certBox offers a feature for the instant end-to-end encryption to arbitrary recipients who do not have a certificate. This is done by ad-hoc issued certificates.

The Secardeo certBox appliance cluster provides these services reliably and transparent to the user. It has successfully proven its value for the enormous increase of encryption with partners for many years.

