



CASE STUDY



Name.com

A Leading Registrar Offers VeriSign® Identity Protection Authentication Services to Avoid Fraudulent Domain Name Transfer



Name.com

name.com

SOLUTION SUMMARY

Name.com deploys an innovative and sophisticated new security service, based on VeriSign Identity Protection Authentication Services, to offer its clients an enhanced level of security to conveniently ensure the integrity of their domain name assets.

Industry

- Service Provider

Challenges

- Name.com wanted to offer its clients a proactive way to protect their domain name assets.
- Implementation of selected solution had to be completed within very aggressive timeframe to meet launch deadline at the domain industry's premier conference.

Solution

- VeriSign® Identity Protection Authentication Services
- VeriSign® Identity Protection Security Cards

Results

- Name.com has seen a steady increase in the number of clients opting to use the NameSafe Service.
- Deployment was accomplished within a couple of weeks, with the formal launch announced at the domain name industry's largest annual conference.
- Anecdotal feedback from current users of the tokens, and positive comments on industry blogs, indicate the additional protection is really appreciated and valued.

In 2003, Name.com (or “Name” as it is more succinctly known) was launched as a unique, independent, and fully ICANN-accredited domain registrar. Name.com has continued to build on this foundation by being recognized as an innovator and industry leader through offering compelling customer service and a powerful portfolio of tools. To make the process of registering and managing domain names easy and convenient, Name.com makes building robust partnerships with their clients a top priority. In today's Web-centric business world, choosing the optimal domain name is one of an organization's most critical tasks—Name's search tools make it easy and fast by encompassing a scan of premium domains, expiring domains, and recently deleted domains to help find the most advantageous selection for the client.

+ Avoiding Fraudulent Domain Name Transfer

Recently, Name has seen an increase in customers seeking an additional layer of security for their domain name registry functions. Businesses are seeking to avoid potential exposure to hack attacks and other malicious activities. Kellie Peterson, director of marketing and operations for Name.com, explained, “Many clients are showing more caution right from the outset when embarking on domain name registration selection and management. Unfortunately, numerous others are finding out the importance of maintaining domain name integrity the hard way—sharing their passwords with Web designers or affiliates, not subsequently changing it, and then later seeing their domain names being compromised—they are quickly realizing the criticality of having appropriate security in place to protect their domain name assets.”

“We have seen a rise in the number of domain names being fraudulently transferred from one registrar to another,” noted Peterson. “Recently, either via social engineering, hacking, or by other means, someone gained access to a high-value account at another registrar and made a domain name transfer to Name.com—it became a very public issue. Thankfully Name.com was able to work with the official registrants to return the domain to them quickly, but nonetheless, we wanted to offer our clients the choice to have a more secure solution.”

In general, the more valuable a domain name becomes, the more vulnerable it becomes. According to the May 2008 Advisory Report from the ICANN Security and Stability Advisory Committee, across the industry the number of people reporting attacks is constantly rising. “Some domain names have become extremely valuable, selling for tens of thousands and even millions of dollars,” stated Peterson. “The more valuable they grow to be, the more access to them needs to be protected and secured. We decided we needed to offer a convenient way for our clients to proactively improve the protection of their domain name assets.”

+ First to Market with Two-Factor Authentication

During the investigation into enhanced security solutions Name.com realized it could be first-to-market with an offering of two-factor authentication, and this opportunity for competitive differentiation was very attractive. “It meant we could appeal to a certain type of customer that hadn't previously wanted to do business with a registrar of our size or age, assuming we lacked sophisticated security measures,” Peterson reflected.

Members of Name's staff, including the CEO, had experience with two-factor authentication solutions at previous companies and were familiar with the security marketplace. "We already had an existing and positive relationship with VeriSign because of being a registrar covering .com, .net and .tv domain names," Peterson commented, "so it was a natural evolution of the relationship to closely evaluate VeriSign® Identity Protection Authentication Services."

VeriSign Identity Protection (VIP) Authentication Services is a software-as-a-service solution that enables two-factor validation of a person's identity; the first factor being a conventional password set up by the user, and the second being a one-time password (OTP) generated by a unique token held only by the user. VIP Authentication Services leverages the VIP Network, which is a standards-based shared authentication network enabling multiple organizations to share a common VeriSign-managed infrastructure for authentication of second-factor credentials, such as OTPs.

Having found that VIP Authentication Services would be perfect for its needs, Name chose to immediately move ahead with installation. "Being a managed service it was pretty simple to setup, only taking a couple of weeks to fully implement," noted Peterson, "we had so little time to get it deployed prior to launch. I was delighted we accomplished it so painlessly!"

Name.com launched its new security services at the domain industry's largest annual event; DOMAINfest in Los Angeles, in January 2009. "We branded our security offering the NameSafe Service, and it got a lot of attention at the conference. We handed out dozens of keychain- and credit card- format tokens," stated Peterson. "We're not requiring everyone to use two-factor authentication, but our Web site offers it as an option for our customers. We've opted to charge clients a one-time fee of a few dollars plus shipping per token, and a nominal annual subscription rate to cover our operational costs."

+ The Benefits of VIP Network and Authentication Services Rapidly Become Compelling

It's still early days since the launch of the NameSafe Service but Peterson reports a steady rise in the number of clients opting to utilize it. "We haven't done any mailings to our customer base to inform them of this new security option just yet, but already—from people visiting the Web site—we're mailing out a steady flow of tokens every day," recounted Peterson. "Once we more proactively announce the Service I'm anticipating a bulge in demand for the tokens. Our hope is that the top five percent of our clients will take up this opportunity to further protect their valuable domain names."

Name also is considering asking its customer service agents to encourage clients with higher value domain names, or broad digital portfolios, to engage in this additional layer of protection. "Of course it's sometimes hard to persuade a customer that they need this protection until something bad happens! A one-on-one conversation with an agent can help make the benefits of the NameSafe Service more tangible. We've had

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Kellie Peterson, director of marketing and operations, Name.com

enthusiastic anecdotal feedback from current users of the tokens, and positive comments on industry blogs, that the additional protection is really appreciated,” said Peterson. “By being part of the VIP Network our clients can leverage the tokens to access their eBay, PayPal and AOL accounts as well, and enjoy only needing to have the one token.”

Peterson concluded, “We want to be the place where people instinctively come to start and complete their naming search. We’ve worked hard to be a strong player in the industry; we’re offering best-in-class tools to find domain names and now—thanks to VeriSign Identity Protection Authentication Services—we can secure them too.”

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