

CASE STUDY



OVERVIEW

Black Hat, organized by UBM Americas, hosts three information security conferences each year, providing attendees with the latest in research, development and trends. As the world's premiere information security conference, Black Hat USA attracts some 17,000 security gurus, bringing together security thought leaders from around the world—from business, government and academia and even researchers.

REQUIREMENTS

- A secure and reliable network
- Support for high device density
- Easy to manage
- Future-proof network that can scale with the growth of the event

SOLUTION

- Over 30 ICX fixed form-factor switches to provide 802.3af power to the access points (APs)
- 120 802.11ac indoor Ruckus APs
- SmartZone controller

BENEFITS

- Secure network that detected and blocked several malware proliferation attempts by revoking network access for the responsible devices during the entire conference
- Ability to support more than 17,000 clients
- Future-proof network

RELIABLE HIGH-DENSITY NETWORK AT WORLD'S PREMIERE INFORMATION SECURITY CONFERENCE

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Black Hat attendees are there to learn and test security, so the network has got to be safe while delivering the connectivity experience the attendees expect.

Heather Williams, solutions architect at Ruckus provides some history, "In 2015 and 2016, the Ruckus-provided Wi-Fi existed as an overlay to other networks, which created some interesting challenges."

In 2016, Ruckus ICX switches and 802.11ac APs yielded a secure, reliable network that met both attendees' and Black Hat's expectations. The decision was made that Ruckus would be their exclusive Wi-Fi and switching provider starting in 2017.

SOLUTION

The 2017 Black Hat network was built by three lead vendors: Palo Alto Networks for the firewall, RSA for network monitoring, and Ruckus for Wi-Fi and switching.

For the U.S. conference in Las Vegas, Ruckus deployed more than 30 ICX fixed form-factor switches to provide 802.3af power to a maximum of 120 Ruckus 802.11ac APs. Another two ICX switches were used for aggregation. A Ruckus SmartZone controller took care of WLAN control and management. During the training sessions, 85 APs supported a peak concurrent client load of 2,500 that carried more than 1TB of data each day, a feat made all the more difficult due to the venue infrastructure Wi-Fi network being in clear line-of-sight.

BLACK HAT

Ruckus Becomes Black Hat's Exclusive Wi-Fi and Switching Vendor

CASE STUDY



“We don’t need wires, we have Ruckus.”

BART STUMP

Network Operations Lead, Black Hat

Such a high-interference environment demands an approach that minimizes the effects of so many transmitters competing for airtime. For Ruckus, that approach includes its patented BeamFlex™ antenna technology. BeamFlex technology optimizes antenna patterns on a per-client, per-packet basis to yield the maximum possible throughput for each and every client.

To further secure the network, Ruckus teamed up with RGNets. The RGNets RxG appliance enabled Ruckus to securely segment the attendee network from the Network Operations Center (NOC) network. To further enhance the attendee experience, Ruckus used the RxG to establish a separate VLAN for each training class, enabling students and instructors to remain on their VLAN across the convention center for the duration of their classes.

The result: a secure network that detected and blocked several malware proliferation attempts by revoking network access for the responsible devices.

“Black Hat USA is a demanding environment, requiring a high-performing, secure network infrastructure to support more than 17,000 security professionals from all over the world. Ruckus has proven itself an effective and reliable technology partner, scaling with the growth of the event even as we’ve moved more of our infrastructure to wireless technology. Ruckus is an integral part of the Black Hat NOC team,” stated Steve Wylie, general manager of Black Hat.

With the 2017 event season completed without a network security or experience compromise, Black Hat is confident that it made the right decision.

“We don’t need wires, we have Ruckus,” concluded Bart Stump, Black Hat network operations lead.

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