

Customer Story

Booking.com *improves both security and usability*

17,000 users transitioned in weeks

Tens of thousands of risky transactions blocked

Four legacy tools replaced by one browser

Full endpoint visibility gained

⚡ Impact Summary

Digital travel company Booking.com sought an alternative to its VPN, which offered only poor visibility and management. By adopting Island, it did that for its enormous Customer Service team. And thanks to Island DEX, system bottlenecks are now quickly identified and cleared.

Booking.com

Industry

Travel & Hospitality

Use Cases

3rd party contractors
Access management
Data protection
Digital experience
Enterprise browser
SaaS and web apps
User productivity



Challenges

- ✓ Complicated online access for Customer Service team
- ✓ VPN lacked both visibility and control over endpoints
- ✓ Insecure access for contractors and other third parties

The Challenge

For digital travel company Booking.com, customer service is a big deal. Travelers worldwide use the company's website to reserve accommodations, airline flights, car rentals, taxi rides, and more.

Since 2010 Booking.com has managed more than 6.8 billion guest arrivals across all properties and hosted nearly 380 million verified customer reviews. The company's website, available in 45 languages, offers over 31 million listings. And to serve all those customers, Booking.com's customer organization boasts a staff of over 15,000 people worldwide.

Unfortunately, the VPN that formerly connected Booking.com's remote workers with corporate data and systems was complicated. And the VPN's visibility and management capabilities were both extremely limited.

"We didn't know exactly which devices were on the network or how frequently they were connected," recounts Rodrigo Varandas, Senior Endpoints Engineer. "The tools we used couldn't do that kind of monitoring."

This technology challenge was made more complicated as well as more urgent by Booking.com's own rapid expansion. Founded in 1996, Booking.com has since grown to become a leading digital travel company. It's now one of five businesses owned by publicly traded Booking Holdings Inc., which is also growing quickly. Last year, Booking Holdings reported revenue of \$26.9 billion, a year-on-year increase of 13%.

"With Island, it felt like we turned on a light in a dark room and we were able to finally see what was happening outside of our perimeter with extreme details and precision."

Rodrigo Varandas, Senior Endpoints Engineer, Booking.com



The Solution

To replace the VPN, Booking.com decided to make the Island Enterprise Browser the virtual front door to the company's systems. Booking.com also decided that the first users of the Island browser would be Customer Service workers. Because Customer Service staff communicate with customers via phone, email, and chat, having excellent connectivity tools is vital.

Booking.com gave Island two main goals: create a smooth user experience, and accelerate customer-facing pages and apps. Booking.com also adopted Island Digital Employee Experience (DEX), an integrated platform that provides full-stack visibility across apps, devices, and network layers, to analyze and speed internal systems.

Booking.com's rollout of the Island Enterprise Browser was fast and effective. Thousands of users were equipped with the browser in just weeks. Yet the impact on the IT Support team was essentially nil, according to Gareth Nicholson, Product Manager for Endpoints at Booking.com.

"To be able to transition 17,000 employees over to Island with very little downtime and very few IT support tickets, that's a testament to how well the Island platform works," Nicholson says.

"It was a huge success," adds Dave Jerome, Booking.com's Engineering Manager - Global Endpoints, "Island is by far the best supplier I've worked with in my career."

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Results

Today Booking.com relies on Island to block end users from performing prohibited actions such as copy/pasting web pages. After the initial rollout, Island blocked tens of thousands of these events, according to Varandas. "Before, we didn't know if these events were happening or not," he says. "Now we're actually making the environment more secure."

Island DEX has been another winner for Booking.com. In one instance, the Endpoints team used DEX after contractors complained that some company webpages were loading slowly. As discovered with DEX, the culprit was not the website, but instead contractor laptops configured with only half the memory Booking.com required.

Also thanks to Island, Booking.com has simplified its software stack. The company has eliminated not only the VPN, but also unmanaged browsers, antivirus software, and data-loss prevention tools. Those capabilities are all now provided by Island.

"It's all packaged up in something that's very, very easy to manage and scale across the entire organization," Nicholson says. "This is a massive simplification of our tech stack."

Indeed, other Booking.com groups have learned about Island, and the company now plans to give the Island browser to eight internal teams, as well as to selected third-party contractors.

"Island just works," Varandas says. "I don't know how I can be more precise than that."

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Gareth Nicholson, Endpoints Product Manager, Booking.com



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