brussels airlines

CUSTOMER STORY

How an airline uses bug bounty to improve IT security

CISO AND DATA PRIVACY OFFICER

Jean-François Simons

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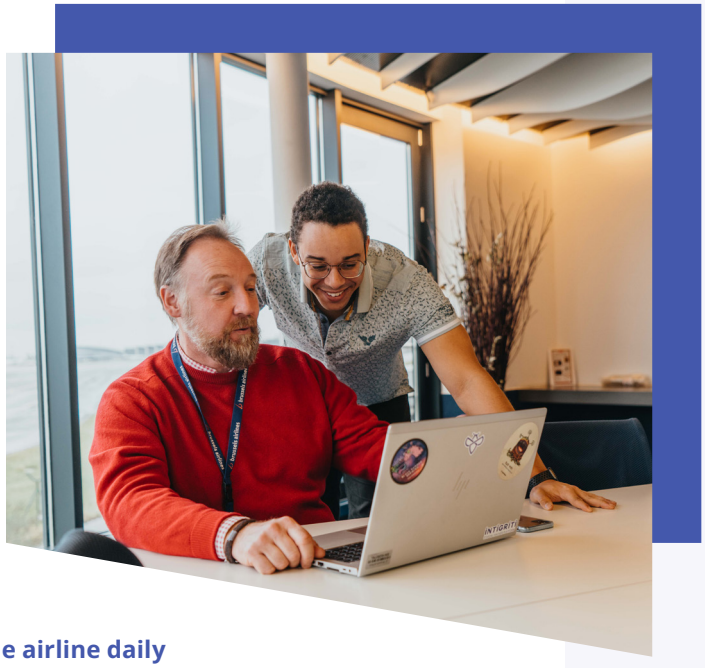
How an airline uses bug bounty to improve IT security



Brussels Airlines is a member of the Lufthansa Group. The airline daily operates around 300 flights daily to over 100 European and African destinations, New York, Washington D.C. and Toronto.

The challenge

Obtaining internal buy-in for bug bounty programs

Ethical hacking through bug bounty concepts caught the attention of Jean-François Simons, CISO & Privacy Officer of Brussels Airlines, years ago. For the management team, however, the prospect of letting crowdsourced security experts find undetected issues was not an easy decision to take. Mr Simons' was able to explain why the Airlines needed to work with ethical hackers, not against them:

> "We need the support of ethical hackers to reinforce our IT Security before non-ethical hackers find a possible vulnerability which, of course, they will not report to us."

Defining scope and budget

Another internal concern that was voiced to Simons was the way in which the Airlines would manage bounties, such as controlling the number of reports submitted and managing costs. This challenge was overcome by working with Intigriti to launch a bug bounty program on its platform.

Before launching, Intigriti helped Brussels Airlines define a scope of the project and set a limit to the potential reward that would go to the researchers who found vulnerabilities. With a clear scope and a predefined budget, the bug bounty program got off to a good start.

The solution

Penetration testing as a clean-up before bug bounty

Jean-François Simons' team saw penetration testing as a step to take before launching a bug bounty program:

> "Performing a penetration test first is good practice. It's the sequential review you do before you improve your overall security posture through specialists."

Explaining further, Simons said:

> "Ethical hackers are experts in their domain — some do cross-site scripting, some are SQL injection experts, and so on. Pentesting does SQL injection too but on a higher level. The vulnerabilities found through our program could only be discovered by highly-specialised people"

We wanted to come as close as possible to a bulletproof IT security situation. We called upon Intigriti's ethical hackers, who found a critical vulnerability which we then mitigated.

JEAN-FRANÇOIS SIMONS
CISO AND DATA PRIVACY OFFICER, BRUSSELS AIRLINES

brussels airlines

INDUSTRY
Airlines - Aviation

PASSENGERS
10.2 million

REVENUE
1.6 billion EUR

> **Intigriti is more than a sanctioning tool. There is great added value in the close collaboration on the platform. When an issue is found, both the internal and the external teams work together to solve the problem.**

JEAN-FRANÇOIS SIMONS
CISO AND DATA PRIVACY OFFICER,
BRUSSELS AIRLINES

The result

PR value, collaboration opportunities & greater security awareness

It is not just finding the bugs and vulnerabilities that makes Intigriti valuable for Brussels Airlines. Mr Simons points out the PR value:

> "The fact that we are using a bug bounty program shows we really try to go one step further. Should we face a major issue, we will be able to use this."

The bug bounty program also provides the DevOps and digital teams at Brussels Airlines with learning and development opportunities. As a result of working with ethical hackers to find a patch, there is a greater awareness of ongoing cybersecurity threats. Additionally, staff are more engaged with the airline's mission to continuously protect and improve upon Information Security.

> "Working with ethical hackers shows that we put a lot of effort into looking for potential weaknesses within our cybersecurity defences — we're not just sitting around waiting for something to happen."

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- **400+ live bug bounty programs**
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- **Strong global presence**

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