



Akamai Protects Germany's First Interactive Web-to-Print Service from DDoS and Web Application Attacks

AKAMAI CASE STUDY



Faced with a growing number of online threats, we felt the need to seek out a specialist that could help us provide extra layers of protection for our customers' data. Akamai, and the Web Application Protector solution, offer exactly the support we were looking for.

— Thomas Demann, General Manager of IT, PrintPlanet.de

Background

PrintPlanet.de is the online branch of a medium-sized, owner-managed digital printing company. It was one of the first interactive web-to-print services in Germany when it was founded in 2001. Today, the group employs 120 people and has a product portfolio that ranges from photo gifts, such as personalized mugs and t-shirts, to business cards and corporate brochures. PrintPlanet has over 1 million private customers and serves a further 1,000 commercial clients on a separate business platform (www.printplanet-business.de).

Having successfully thwarted multiple attempted distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks on its online shops, PrintPlanet was becoming all too aware of the growing threat it faced on the Internet. At the same time, it was pouring more and more resources into its services to keep them secure. "The bigger we became, the more time we spent on preventing attacks," says Thomas Demann, General Manager of IT at PrintPlanet, commenting on the urgent need for action, which he identified in June 2017. To ensure that it could keep dedicating enough time to developing its core business, the web-to-print service wanted to work with a specialist to take care of both the security of vital customer data and the performance of its website.

THE COMPANY

PrintPlanet GmbH
Garbsen, Germany
www.printplanet.de

INDUSTRY

Business services
Web-to-print services

SOLUTIONS

- Akamai Web Application Protector
- Akamai Fast DNS

KEY IMPACTS

- Protection of PrintPlanet's online shops from downtime and data theft
- 100% availability — even during seasonal peaks in demand
- Appropriate protection of the web environment has made it easier to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- High degree of automation of the WAF lightened the IT team's workload
- Ability to focus on core business processes thanks to the outsourcing of cloud security and performance with the Akamai Intelligent Platform™

The Challenge

PrintPlanet wanted its new IT partner to assume responsibility for protecting its web servers since, at the time, this was the IT department's most time-consuming task. It also wanted scalable server capacity so that performance bottlenecks could be avoided during seasonal peaks in demand, such as at Christmas. This is a significant cost factor for many companies, which often feel its impact when they invest in expensive server capacity, only for it to remain unused for most of the year. Besides looking for a partner with expertise in the areas of performance and security, PrintPlanet was seeking an all-around solution that could be implemented quickly and would meet the requirements of its web-to-print service. "Akamai was the best fit for our needs," recalls Demann.

The Goals

- **Solve security problems.** Better protection for PrintPlanet's online shops — with an easy-to-manage solution.
- **Overcome performance bottlenecks.** Withstand seasonal peaks in demand, such as at Christmas.
- **Concentrate on the core areas of business.** Reduce the workload of the IT department, enabling it to concentrate on important and long-delayed projects.
- **Ensure compliance.** Support in meeting the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- **Guarantee adaptability.** Standardized filters, supplemented by customized web application firewall (WAF) rules, with a high degree of automation.

Why Akamai?

PrintPlanet hosts its site with PlusServer GmbH, which has been a Platinum Partner in Akamai's NetAlliance Partner Program for many years. So when PrintPlanet explained its need for security and performance, PlusServer didn't hesitate to recommend Akamai — a one-stop solution that could be provided under the PlusServer umbrella.

Security and performance with Web Application Protector

Akamai's Web Application Protector is an easy-to-manage, all-in-one, cloud-based solution that combines a web application firewall with protection against DDoS attacks. The solution is also integrated into Akamai's Intelligent Platform™, so it offers a high level of scalability and performance.

With Web Application Protector, inquiries sent to PrintPlanet are initially inspected by Akamai's servers, which only forward on legitimate user requests. This means that the solution is designed to foil attacks before they can reach the client's infrastructure. Thanks to the additional integration of Akamai FastDNS, IP address translation also takes place in the cloud, allowing DNS spoofing or manipulation to be thwarted quickly. Additionally, Web Application Protector is very transparent for its users. Thanks to the real-time visualization feature, PrintPlanet can monitor network lists and file or web server manipulation attempts (file inclusion). "While the filters ensure that a high level of protection is provided as standard, they also allow us to define our own rules, such as blacklists, for individual cases," explains Demann.

The Akamai solution also supports PrintPlanet in complying with the reporting requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In the event of a data breach, PrintPlanet is able to report the incident to the supervisory authority within 72 hours and, with the help of data provided by Akamai, can provide the evidence to help support its position that its protective measures are adequate. Moreover, when it comes to the performance bottlenecks that occur as a result of seasonal peaks in traffic, PrintPlanet benefits from Akamai's scalable and high-performance infrastructure with a 100% availability SLA. This is thanks to the Intelligent Platform, which can provide additional server capacity on the fly to meet demand.

Fast installation and low maintenance requirements

Web Application Protector is a security solution for SMEs that stands out for its low maintenance requirements and simple installation. Although an Akamai representative was on site during the setup process, Demann was able to install the system himself. Virtually no changes were needed to PrintPlanet's in-house infrastructure. "Everything was up and running within less than two weeks," sums up Demann. What's more, the staff in the IT department will now be able to focus on their key projects again.

About PrintPlanet

PrintPlanet GmbH is a medium-sized, owner-managed company headquartered in Garbsen near Hanover. As an online branch and subsidiary of a full-service digital printing company, PrintPlanet.de offers a wide range of value-added photographic products (e.g., photo advent calendars), personalized textiles, and large-format prints. PrintPlanet.de has been online since 2001 and was one of the first interactive web-to-print sites in Germany.

About PlusServer

PlusServer is the market leader in managed hosting in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The company draws on its comprehensive product portfolio, which is optimized for the needs of SMEs and large corporations alike, to develop customized hosting and cloud solutions.



As the world's largest and most trusted cloud delivery platform, Akamai makes it easier for its customers to provide the best and most secure digital experiences on any device, anytime, anywhere. Akamai's massively distributed platform is unparalleled in scale, giving customers superior performance and threat protection. Akamai's portfolio of web and mobile performance, cloud security, enterprise access, and video delivery solutions are supported by exceptional customer service and 24/7/365 monitoring. To learn why the top financial institutions, online retail leaders, media and entertainment providers, and government organizations trust Akamai, please visit www.akamai.com, blogs.akamai.com, or [@Akamai](https://twitter.com/Akamai) on Twitter. Published 07/18.