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## CASE STUDY: RANSOM SPARES

# KEEPING BOTS AT BAY FOR RANSOM SPARES

### Scenario

Ransom Spares had begun to experience sudden high volumes of traffic, which involved IP ranges from AWS and Google Cloud attacking the company's servers. These attacks were flooding the website with traffic, which slowed down the site and impacted availability and performance.

Attempting to manually mitigate each of these attacks required a significant amount of time from external IT consultants. The attacks overwhelmed the resources available and manual efforts ended up blocking some legitimate traffic to the site. Coupled with poor performance, this was costing the company orders and impacting brand satisfaction.

Whilst the motivation of the attacks is for now undetermined, the following three theories are some of the most likely:

- Price scraping BOT's – Competitors will utilise a scripted BOT distributed amongst a range of IP's to keep updated on any price movements. This allows them to automatically update their own website and maintain the lowest prices.
- Server usage BOT's – A scripted BOT that will steadily increase traffic across distributed IP ranges with the purpose \ of slowing down site performance without *being as callous as full-scale DDoS attack*.
- Content Indexing – A script that will index a competitors valuable content which can then be used if selling the same product lines, rather than pay for internal upkeep and resource. This also negatively impacts SEO rankings.

### Solution

Getting this family business back on their feet was a priority for the Link11 team. After Ransom Spares sought help, Link11 implemented a number of solutions to block the DDoS attacks and restore customer satisfaction. These included Zero Touch Web Application Firewall (WAF), BOT mitigation protection, Link11 DDoS protection and DNS protection which are all part of the Link11 Cloud Security Platform.

Having the full complement of Link11's web security options gave Ransom Spares a holistic approach which would provide protection even if the attackers changed their approach or target.



## Results

Working closely with the Link11 developer team, Lee Gilbert and the Ransom Spares team were able to utilise and tune the machine learning algorithms to maximise intruder blocking, whilst keeping false positives minimal. This resulted in improved site performance, less downtime and lower customer drop off rates.

Looking at the data and results, which are available within the reporting dashboard of Link11's cloud security platform, it was fascinating to see that indeed the increased traffic was mostly malicious scripted BOT activity. The analysis showed that the attacks were highly distributed, coming via hacked cloud accounts including AWS and Google Cloud IP ranges. Initially, the Link11 Web DDoS protection prevented the site from performance degradation, with BOT protection then identifying bad BOTs and blocking based on specific behaviours and patterns.

### LEE GILBERT – OWNER RANSOM SPARES

*"It's been a real eye-opener for us as a small e-commerce company! When the attacks started it took some time to establish exactly what the cause was. We were able to manually intervene and at least stop the attacks from overwhelming our resources. However, it was clear that we needed a permanent 'hands off' solution. Which is where Link11 came in. I've been most impressed with their system, and the people behind it. Nothing was too much trouble and they have done exactly what they said they could."*

### JOSS PENFOLD – REGIONAL DIRECTOR UK & IRELAND, LINK11

*"While the origin of the attacks is undetermined, we speculate that it could be the result of a competitor looking to gain an advantage by flooding the website, causing downtime and greater bounce rates. It is always a pleasure to work with family-owned businesses where our solutions have a direct impact on protecting livelihoods, and we're proud to support Ransom Spares."*

## ABOUT RANSOM SPARES

Ransom Spares (<https://www.ransomspares.co.uk/>) is a family-run company based in Somerset selling spares, parts and accessories for the home and garden, under the overall aim of promoting a 'repair' culture instead of a 'throw away' society. The site offers over 1 million different products covering more than 500 brands, as well as 30,000+ images and exploded diagrams to help their customers quickly identify the spare part they need.