



CASE STUDY

Barracuda blocks bot traffic to speed up business-critical website for training provider SyntraPXL.

Barracuda Application Protection helps to preserve vital revenue stream by making online subscriptions easier.

Customer

- SyntraPXL is a vocational training provider dedicated to nurturing the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.
- The Belgian firm offers hundreds of apprenticeship and entrepreneurial courses from five training centers and campuses across the region.

Challenges

- A website slowed down by malicious and bot traffic, impacting reputation and student experience

Solutions



Barracuda

Application Protection™

Benefits

- Much faster website performance
- Improved student experience
- Preserved a vital revenue stream
- One million attacks per week blocked



Traffic from automated software applications (bots) is increasingly commonplace on the internet. From search engine crawlers and price comparison bots to web scrapers and denial of service (DoS) bots, it's [estimated](#) to account for around half of all internet traffic today. But for one company, the ratio at the start of 2024 was a lot worse. Belgian training provider [SyntraPXL](#) found that 91% of traffic to its site came from bots — slowing down the experience for prospective students.

“For our core business, it is critically important that our website is fast and user friendly,” explains IT Manager, Niels Smets. “You must subscribe via the website before the start of the new academic year.”

Sensing a business-critical problem, Niels contacted Barracuda right away, and our Barracuda Application Protection offering was up and running within the day.

What's going on?

Although SyntraPXL offers in-person rather than online teaching, its website is the only way students can subscribe to courses. Niels spotted that the SyntraPXL site had slowed to a crawl at the start of 2024. He had one eye on the busy April period when students rush to enroll before the start of the new academic year in May.

“Every step, every search, every subscription was very slow for each person in our organization and our clients. So we asked our hosting provider ‘what’s happening?’,” he explains. “In the past, we never noticed this kind of problem because we allocated more resources [to hosting].”

What SyntraPXL's hosting provider found caused immediate alarm: a large volume of bot traffic from all over the world, including Russia, China, and the US. As an existing customer of Barracuda Email Protection, Niels knew immediately what he needed and who to call. A proof-of-concept for [Barracuda Application Protection](#) was operational within hours.

Deployed in minutes

Barracuda Application Protection is a comprehensive web application and API protection platform that can be deployed in minutes. It can prevent web and API attacks, including the OWASP Top 10 web and API attacks, zero day attacks, business logic attacks and more. It's Machine Learning-powered Advanced Bot Protection can identify and block advanced bots, including low-and-slow bots that perform scraping and Account Takeover attacks. It comes with unmetered volumetric and application DDoS prevention.

SyntraPXL actually ran a PoC of Barracuda Application Protection a year previously, but had seen no need to progress beyond that stage as it was happy with its website performance. Fast forward 12 months and it was a different story. After setup, Niels first ran the product in read mode to observe the incoming traffic. After three days he switched to “block” because of the high rate of attacks.

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One million reasons to love Barracuda Application Protection

The Barracuda product revealed various types of bot traffic slowing down the SyntraPXL site, ranging from Russian and Chinese search engines to crawlers on AWS compute machines, and ChatGPT and other AI web scrapers. “The impact of Barracuda Application Protection was immediate, commented Niels. It blocked one million attacks in just one week, and improved the web experience for our site visitors providing “very high” speeds.”

This has in turn helped to protect SyntraPXL’s core revenue stream, by ensuring prospective students are not deterred by a poor online experience.

“Barracuda Application Protection is saving money for our business because of speeding up our website,” says Niels. “It’s difficult to measure precisely the monthly cost of the product versus recurring incoming [revenue] from our customers when they didn’t notice any latency. But for our core business, it’s been very important.”

Niels has also been impressed by “very quick and helpful” local Barracuda support in Belgium, which he can reach over the same line whether it’s an email or a web application query. All that remains for the firm is to “fine-tune” a few settings to unblock some legitimate traffic.

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Niels Smets, IT Manager
SyntraPXL

Learn more:



Barracuda

Application Protection™

[Barracuda Application Protection](#) is a full-featured, cloud-delivered application security service — that includes web application, API, botnet protection and comprehensive protection against DDoS attacks that also ensures continuous application availability. Barracuda Application Protection can be deployed, configured, and commissioned in minutes. It provides out-of-the-box protection with the default security policies, and the intuitive interface makes it easy to set up custom policies.



About Barracuda

At Barracuda we strive to make the world a safer place.

We believe every business deserves access to cloud-first, enterprise-grade security solutions that are easy to buy, deploy, and use. We protect email, networks, data and applications with innovative solutions that grow and adapt with our customers' journey. More than 200,000 organizations worldwide trust Barracuda to protect them — in ways they may not even know they are at risk — so they can focus on taking their business to the next level. For more information, visit barracuda.com.