



CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

Spark New Zealand Delights Customers with Frictionless, Secure Access to Self-Service Portal and Smartphone App

New Zealand's largest telecom modernizes IAM with the ForgeRock Identity Platform™, streamlining authentication and access management

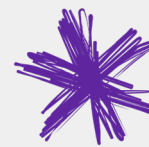
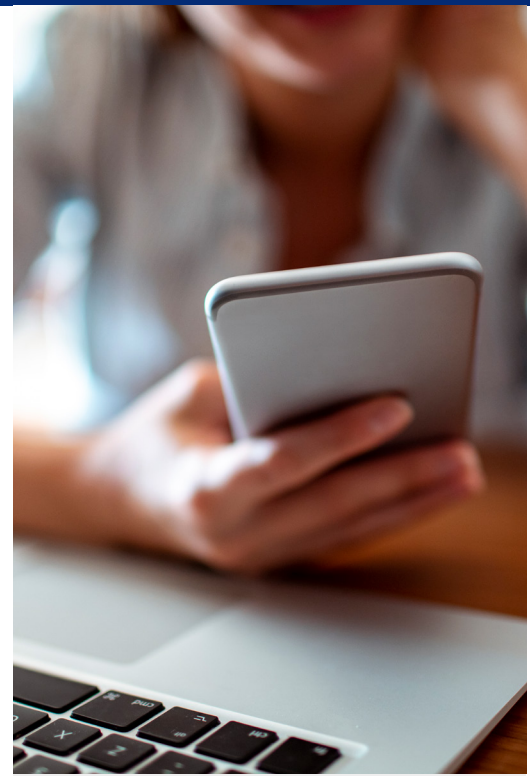
People across New Zealand stay connected with Spark NZ. This country-wide telecommunications provider offers a wide range of mobile, broadband, and fixed-line services, and it's on the cutting edge of rolling out new 5G wireless broadband offerings.

Providing secure access to this wide range of service offerings while also making it easy for customers to manage their accounts is a challenge. As lead developer for the Identity and Access Management (IAM) team for Spark, Marc Priebee faces this challenge every day.

"We have a self-service portal and a smart phone app for our customers to manage their services and accounts," Priebee says. "To encourage people to use them, we try to remove as many barriers to access as possible, without sacrificing security. That's why we have everything sitting behind ForgeRock Access Management. We use REST APIs for authentication rather than login pages, and we persist sessions, particularly on the smartphone app, so customers can just open the app and they're in their account without reauthenticating. ForgeRock has greatly simplified this for us and provides a platform for continuing to enhance our IAM capabilities."

Modernizing Access Management on a Unified Platform

After years of upgrades and add-ons, the company had three separate legacy access management systems. Rather than face three major migration projects, Priebee and the IAM team determined the most efficient approach was to modernize and extend the company's IAM infrastructure with one unified platform.



Spark^{nz}

"What drew us to ForgeRock was that it enabled us to present a login page with Access Management and use Identity Gateway to connect to the existing legacy backend systems. There aren't many products that can do that."

Marc Priebee
Lead Developer,
Identity and Access Management (IAM)
for Spark NZ

Moving off a proprietary legacy access management system and two open source systems, Priebee says ForgeRock was a natural fit. “What drew us to ForgeRock was that it enabled us to present a login page with Access Management and use Identity Gateway to connect to the existing legacy backend systems. There aren’t many products that can do that.”

The ability to coexist with legacy systems, combined with a seamless migration from the open source products, spared Spark the pain of ripping and replacing its old IAM infrastructure while unifying access management on the standards-based ForgeRock platform.

Today, with the modernization complete, Spark relies on ForgeRock Access Management to authenticate approximately 7,000 internal users and 3.5 million consumers for frictionless, secure access to more than 60 applications. In addition to providing single sign-on and session management, Spark also leverages the social sign-on function to authenticate users through their Google or Facebook accounts.

Priebee notes that his team relies extensively on the REST APIs provided by the ForgeRock platform to authenticate users with an OpenID Connect mechanism rather than presenting login pages. “Our focus is on making access as easy and seamless as possible for our customers while maintaining a high level of security. For example, we use the main authentication tokens to persist access to those APIs so users can stay logged in for weeks, which everybody likes.”

Increased flexibility and control with Identity Gateway

Since Spark has moved off of its legacy access management systems, the IAM team has greatly expanded use of Identity Gateway. For example, rather than rely on proxies to handle policy enforcement, that’s now managed through Identity Gateway.

“We find Identity Gateway to be very flexible,” Priebee says. “We can do more with authentication, such as inserting scripts for custom logic if needed. We also get much better control using Identity Gateway. It gives us a way to handle the authentication cookies, and in the same instance also handle OpenID Connect for both access management and authentication.”

This flexibility enables the IAM team to adopt new technologies and processes on the back end while remaining completely transparent to the customer. Priebee points out, “Because we’re in the consumer market, we don’t want to affect the way that customers access the platform when we change the technology. We just want them to see a new service or experience, but not have to change how they access the Spark platform.”

The ability to seamlessly integrate new capabilities behind ForgeRock Access Management also fits well with the agile development methodology at Spark. For example, in the past if someone attempted to sign on using Google but was not already a Spark user, they were returned through an API to be authenticated as an anonymous user. The identity system then had to create an account and reauthenticate the user with the new account. Instead, the agile development team was able to build a prototype in a matter

“Our focus is on making access as easy and seamless as possible for our customers while maintaining a high level of security. For example, we use the main authentication tokens to persist access to those APIs so users can stay logged in for weeks, which everybody likes.”

Marc Priebee
Lead Developer,
Identity and Access Management (IAM)
for Spark NZ

CHALLENGE

Replace three access management solutions to deliver next-generation, secure access to applications and services for employees, partners and customers.

SOLUTION

Implemented comprehensive ForgeRock Access Management™ solution across all three environments to enable 3.5 million users to easily and securely access 60 critical web-based applications.

BENEFITS

- Enables seamless migration from Sun AM and OpenSSO to ForgeRock Access Management.
- Reduces management and maintenance time by consolidating access management from three solutions to one.
- Provides more effective customer service with a common ID and authentication environment.
- Establishes a next-generation access and identity management (IAM) solution that is scalable and extensible for cloud and mobile.
- Deployed in just two months.

of days to streamline this process. The prototype uses the OpenID Connect token presented by Google to authenticate with Access Management through Identity Gateway and create the user account, with only one call made by the integration layer to authenticate with Google.

Priebee comments, "The speed with which we can now build new capabilities into the IAM infrastructure using ForgeRock allows us to get to market faster with new features to enhance the service experience for our customers."

High-performance directory searches and updates

Spark continues to build on its investments in the ForgeRock platform with projects to migrate from its current LDAP directories to ForgeRock Directory Services. Priebee says, "In our performance tests, the responses for searches and updates were considerably faster with ForgeRock Directory Services. The ability to split replications to only replicate what you need, where you need it, is another big advantage."

Spark has multiple sets of directories in different areas of the network for services such as broadband and mobile, each of which is authenticated through a RADIUS front end. Directory Services will enable the IAM team to automate replication of the broadband directories to just the broadband servers, the mobile directories to those relevant servers, and so on. This not only simplifies and accelerates the replication process, but ensures consistency and accuracy across the network.

Priebee advises that he also foresees taking extensive advantage of the REST APIs in Directory Services. "We currently have a lot of custom interfaces into our directories. We would like to migrate those to REST using the APIs that come with Directory Services. We have a large number of applications that need to talk to the directories and doing that through APIs will help us simplify and streamline that communication."

Modernize Identity Management

Spark is further building on its investment in ForgeRock technologies by replacing an aging, legacy IDM platform with ForgeRock Identity Management. Priebee says, "Spark has a complex range of legacy and current internal applications to support our business. Ensuring staff access is both provisioned and deprovisioned from all systems is a critical part of our security landscape."

As Spark moves from the existing personal management platform to a new system, ForgeRock Identity Management will provide the interface to interact with all the internal systems, thereby moving from a file transfer-based provisioning engine, to a REST API.

Over the longer term, Priebee and his team will continue to evaluate how the full range of capabilities provided by the ForgeRock platform can support Spark's continually evolving and expanding IAM needs. At every step of the journey, he feels confident ForgeRock will be there as a true partner to support the team's needs and objectives.

"In my 30 years in this industry, I've never dealt with a vendor that's been easier and more responsive to work with than ForgeRock," Priebee declares. "Our experience with ForgeRock, right from the start, has been second to none. If I have a question, even one that's low-priority, I always get a prompt, knowledgeable answer. That kind of responsiveness helps us keep our projects moving forward."

He concludes, "Ultimately, it all comes down to delivering services that delight our customers, while keeping their accounts and personal information secure."

For more information on ForgeRock and our solutions, visit: forgerock.com

About ForgeRock

ForgeRock, the leader in digital identity, delivers modern and comprehensive Identity and Access Management solutions for consumers, employees and things to simply and safely access the connected world. Using ForgeRock, more than a thousand global customer organizations orchestrate, manage, and secure the complete lifecycle of identities from dynamic access controls, governance, APIs, and storing authoritative data – consumable in any cloud or hybrid environment. The company is privately held, and headquartered in San Francisco, California, with offices around the world. For more information and free downloads, visit www.forgerock.com or follow ForgeRock on social media.



Follow Us

