

Title : HBZ takes third party fund transfer online
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HBZ takes third party fund transfer online

Habib Bank AG Zurich has enhanced the functionality of its online services by expanding its fund transfer capabilities. To combat security concerns, the bank has implemented a raft of solutions.

Habib bank AG Zurich (HBZ) has added an online third party fund transfer facility over to its internet banking portal, HBZweb. The bank's online customers, who have been able to transfer monies online between HBZ accounts since 2000, can use the HBZcms (Cash Management System) service to transfer funds to any bank account anywhere in the world. HBZ believes there will be a large demand for the service in the UAE due to the large number of foreign workers wishing to transfer money home.

"The UAE's role as a regional trade hub, coupled with a large number of expatriate workers, lends to service to be popular with both retail and corporate users", says Amer Farid, HBZ Assistant Vice President. "HBZ currently offers this service in six major currencies and we are using corresponding relationships with more than five hundred banks to offer this service", he adds.

For corporate users, company accounts can be setup with absolute privileges for one user, who can then dictate privileges for other users in the company.

"HBZcms combined with remote banking client services through HBZweb is particularly

useful for both large companies and small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) where senior management travels often and needs to delegate control access to company account receivables and payables to staff", says Farid.

The bank has been keen to dismiss any concerns about the security of the solution and has invested heavily in technology to deal with such challenges. Security measures guarding the HBZ portal comprise 128 bit Secured Socket Layer (SSL) security, proprietary firewalls, username and password protection and a challenge response authentication mechanism whereby the legitimate user is presented with a dynamically-generated picture file containing a unique password that they must enter each time they login. The later feature, previously unseen on Middle East banking sites prevents hackers from using automated process to guess HBZweb passwords.

In addition, the CMS function is one of a raft of HBZweb's facilities that require extra security clearances in the form of the HBZsecure Key. This is an encoded software key that is delivered on a physical medium such as a mini CD, UFD or SD, and must be uploaded to access secure areas. The purpose is to provide an additional layer of security for transactions that involve a third party account.

In order to use CMS facility, user must first subscribe to HBZgsm, a short messaging service (SMS) that sends user a text message confirmation whenever their account is logged into. This service can also be configured to send them text message details of funds transfers. After initial checks, which are made when a transfer request is made under the HBZcms system, the transfer is processed automatically. "HBZ believes intelligent use of technology should offer convenience and security to our clients. HBZ's hPLUS banking system from BiLOGiC systems enables the bank to utilize straight through processing. The reduction in manpower costs and



Habib Bank's Amer Farid says moving services online will allow the bank to pass cost savings on to customers.

redundancy enables HBZ to pass on the cost savings to clients," explains Farid. The minimization of processing means HBZ has been able to reduce the cost to the customer of making fund transfers from Dhs 65 to Dhs 25 per transaction and the maximum amount transferable per day is set at US\$10,000 unless a written request to increase this amount is made.

As yet the CMS solution is only available to HBZ customers in the UAE, although the bank has plans to roll out the scheme in the other countries in which it operates. Farid says that by shifting much of its banking online, HBZ is already enjoying a competitive advantage through reduced costs. "HBZ is now a leader in secure combined web and mobile based ebanking. As a result, more than 70% of its credit customers and 60% of its deposit customers have signed up," he adds. ■

