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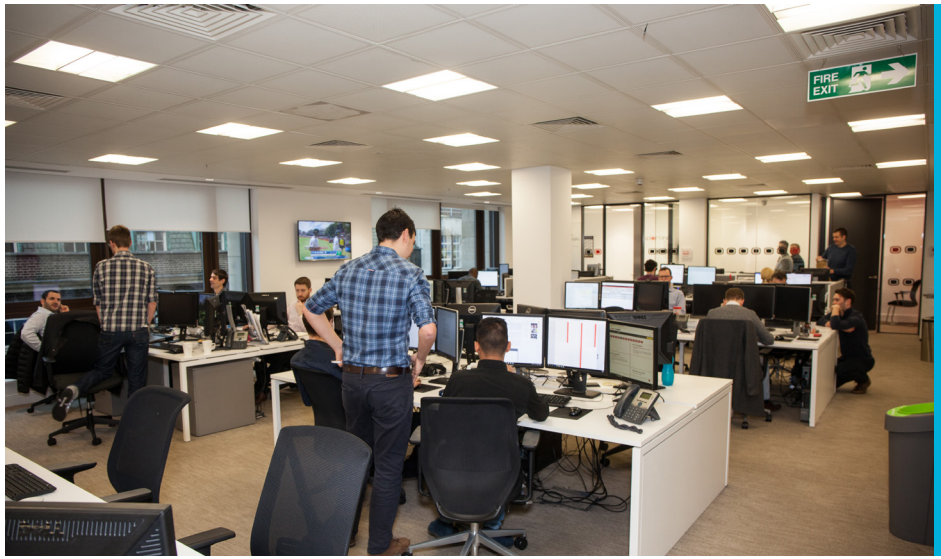

Business challenge

The growing popularity of online sports betting is creating new opportunities for criminals to perpetrate match-fixing fraud. How can Sportradar help federations and law enforcement fight back?

Transformation

Sportradar has created a platform to analyse nine years of structured and unstructured data, helping it rapidly identify potential match-fixers and their global networks of accomplices.

Andreas Krannich
Managing Director of Integrity Services
Sportradar

Business benefits:

4x
efficiency increase in fraud reports generated per month

6x
more persons of interest identified every month

>100x
increase in data generated on persons of interest

Sportradar

Tackling fraudsters by uncovering and following up on hidden patterns in sports betting data

Sportradar is a global leader in understanding and leveraging the power of sports data and digital content for its clients around the world. The company provides cutting-edge solutions and services to media companies, bookmakers, sports federations and state authorities. Employing over 1,850 people in more than 30 locations around the world, Sportradar partners with more than 1,000 companies in over 80 countries worldwide.

"With Rational, we can design and launch new products faster than ever, sharpening our competitive edge."

Andreas Krannich

Managing Director of Integrity Services

Sportradar

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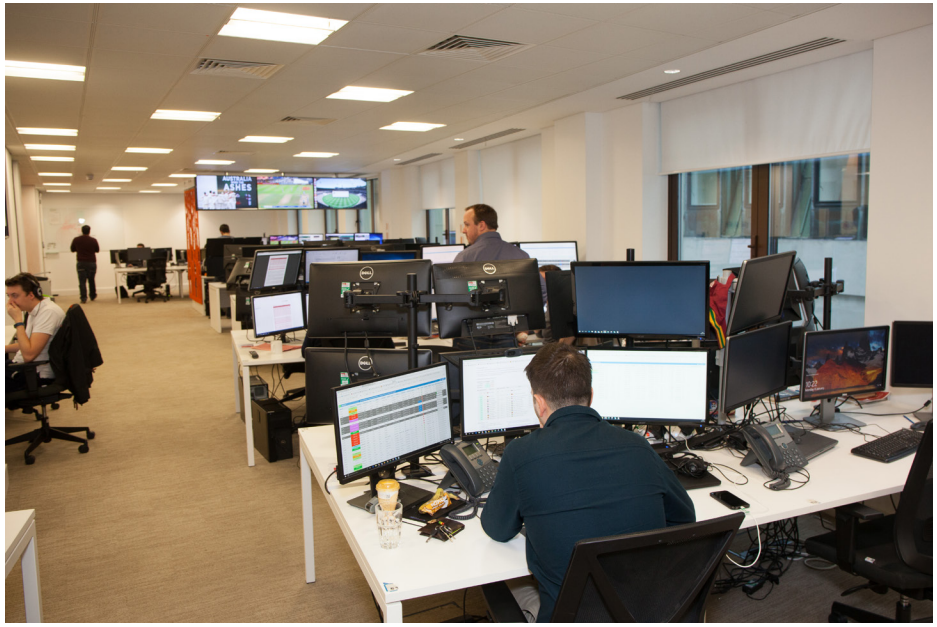
Criminals exploit the online betting world

Online gambling has now made it easier than ever to bet on various sports all over the world—from professional league soccer games to youth tennis tournaments, and even e-sports competitions. For consumers, this new model allows bets to be placed in a faster and more convenient manner than visiting a bookmaker. However, this flexibility also makes online gambling a tempting target for criminal organisations to exploit the system by fixing matches.

Sportradar, a leading data provider for media companies, bookmakers, sports federations and state authorities worldwide, launched its Integrity Services back in 2005. The company is recognised today as one of the foremost suppliers of monitoring, intelligence and prevention solutions in the fight against betting-related match-fixing.

Andreas Krannich, Managing Director of Sportradar's Integrity Services states: "Today, there's far greater opportunity to bet on games happening anywhere worldwide, and we've definitely seen a changing trend in fraud patterns as a result.



"Match-fixing isn't just isolated to a single country or region. You might see a financier in Southeast Asia using a facilitator in Europe to fix matches in regions where law enforcement has fewer resources to deal with the problem, such as South America, for example. Online gambling can make it easier for criminals to work together across these global networks and we have consequently seen a dramatic increase in interest for our services from sports federations, police forces, law enforcement agencies and other similar bodies in recent years."

He continues: "While our fraud detection system [FDS] has always used a mixture of computer automation and expert analysis to pinpoint perpetrators of match-fixing, our process for investigating fraud and identifying those enabling or organising the fixes was heavily dependent on painstaking manual analysis.

"We received information in a variety of structured and unstructured formats, ranging from emails and phone calls from local freelance investigators to data from the FDS. Combing through this data for patterns was a time-consuming process and we were only able to identify around five persons of interest in a given month—a tiny proportion of the criminals who are active in this area."

As demand for its fraud intelligence and investigation services took off, Sportradar wanted a way to accelerate and refine its analytics processes.

"Over a period of several years, we had collected a massive amount of data on potential instances of match fixing and fraud all over the world—but joining the dots between fragments of information about suspected fraudsters was extremely challenging," Krannich comments. "We wanted to drive more comprehensive investigations, and present our evidence in a way that was more likely to be admissible at a sports disciplinary trial or in court if a law enforcement agency decided to press charges. To achieve those goals, we looked for a more automated approach to analytics."

Building a centralised intelligence platform

Sportradar chose IBM® i2® iBase to act as a centralised repository for structured data on potential instances of fraud, and IBM i2 Analyst's Notebook to visualise the data based on the social, geospatial or temporal connections between persons of interest. By extending the solution with IBM i2 iBase IntelliShare, Sportradar enables teams working around the world to contribute and analyse intelligence data.

"We wanted to cross-reference our massive repository of structured and unstructured data to gather intelligence, and the IBM solution offered exactly that capability," recalls Krannich. "We knew that IBM i2 iBase is used extensively by law enforcement agencies around the world, which gave us the confidence that the reports we generated would be trusted."

To accelerate and de-risk the solution deployment, Sportradar turned to IBM Platinum Business Partner Portal. "Our engagement with the Portal team was extremely positive," comments Krannich. "For example, Portal suggested using a third-party tool to feed data from spreadsheets, text files and presentation slide decks into IBM i2 Analyst's Notebook, which proved to be a very valuable recommendation.

"The Portal team also introduced us to a social network analytics tool, which enables us to connect i2 to data from social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. This is something we were only able to do from our own personal accounts in the past."

Working together with Portal, Sportradar deployed these IBM solutions, and connected personnel working around the world with security-rich access to the centralised investigative data repository.

"Engineers from Portal visited us on site to help implement the IBM i2 solution, and it was clear from the outset that they were experienced and knowledgeable," says Krannich. "The Portal team included a senior police analyst, and their deep insight into our requirements helped us configure the platform on time and within budget."

Today, Sportradar's Intelligence and Investigation unit is using the solution to drive their day-to-day work. The users include senior analysts, intelligence investigative analysts and fraud intelligence collators.

"Some members of our team were intelligence analysts with considerable experience using IBM i2 solutions in previous roles, but others with backgrounds such as fraud detection or investigative journalism had not worked with the platform before," adds Krannich.

"By driving a steady change management process, we helped everyone to get up to speed with the new solutions—and today, we can't imagine life without them. Our analysts are particular fans of IBM i2 Analyst's Notebook because of the ability to visualise data from spreadsheets, identify trends quickly, and make decisions with greater confidence."

Getting ahead of fraudsters

With IBM i2 solutions driving its fraud intelligence processes, Sportradar is gaining deeper insights into the organised criminal networks that exploit online gambling to illegally profit from match-fixing.

"Since we deployed IBM i2 iBase and IBM i2 Analyst's Notebook, it's as if we're seeing with new eyes," says Krannich. "We can now produce reports on suspicious patterns of behaviour in hours, not days. That means we can identify potential problems faster, and hone in on the individuals involved in or driving the match-fixing."

He continues: "We know that the people involved in match-fixing tend to do so over long periods of time. In the past, we might have received an email from a freelance investigator with some intelligence about someone involved in criminal behaviour, but it was easy for that information to get lost in the shuffle as the years went by.

"Today, we can automatically connect a tip in an email from nine years ago with new pieces of intelligence from sources such as news articles, court records or social media. This enables us to quickly determine who the individual has been associated with in previous years, and who they are likely to be working with now. In this way, we can very quickly build up a picture of the connections between individuals—even if they are on the other side of the world from one another."

By transitioning to a more automated analytics process, Sportradar can identify more potential suspects than ever before.

"In the past, a single report could take as long as two weeks to produce; now, it's just a matter of days," explains Krannich. "Because we can complete more frequent and deeper analyses in the course of a month, we have increased the number of persons of interest we can identify by a factor of six. Law enforcement and sports governing bodies also recognise the value of the work we're doing—we now collaborate with six times as many of these agencies as we did three years ago. To see the team's reports being integrated into more reports for our clients and being relied on in disciplinary and criminal proceedings is really satisfying and incredibly motivating."

Looking to the future, Sportradar aims to enrich the analytics capabilities of its IBM i2 solutions by adding new data feeds.

"One of the sources of data we are particularly keen to integrate into IBM i2 iBase is our scouting management platform, which should provide us with a valuable additional source of evidence to prevent criminals from tampering with match data," Krannich comments.

He concludes: "Tackling fraud means getting a step ahead of the criminals—and unfortunately, some of the law enforcement agencies that we work with simply can't devote the necessary resources to this issue. By using analytics to lift the veil across the world of match-fixing, we can support our partners with compelling evidence to help build solid cases."

Solution components

- IBM® i2® Analyst's Notebook
- IBM i2 iBase®
- IBM i2 iBase IntelliShare

Take the next step

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