Xcaret's Travel Sites Stay Fast and Secure with Akamai's Security Solutions

Mexican tourism giant Grupo Xcaret relies on Akamai for app and API protection, bot mitigation, and fast and seamless site delivery

100%
controlled attack environment

120%
increase in conversation rates

👍
Bot mitigation dramatically reduces page response times

Grupo Xcaret, a Mexican company specializing in experiential tourism, has become the most important industry referent in the country. "We are looking for people to live an experience immersed in the national culture, and our products revolve around the same thing," says Héctor Salceda, Deputy Director of eCommerce at Grupo Xcaret.

With a strong identity in Mexican folklore, local gastronomy, and culture, Grupo Xcaret has managed to cross borders, positioning itself in different countries in the Americas, Europe, and Asia. The business group is a repeat winner of the Travvy Award for the best experience in tourist parks. It is also part of the World Tourism Organization.

Grupo Xcaret decided to take their crossborder philosophy to its digital channels. Choosing Akamai as a strategic ally was the natural choice. For more than eight years, Akamai has helped the company to optimize the operation, speed, and security of its web pages, and unify payment methods, currencies, languages, and security for clients in the strategic markets in which they have a presence, thus guaranteeing the best user experience from the first moment.

Mexico in the world: Xcaret becomes a crossborder company

Grupo Xcaret knew that in order to penetrate an international market, they had to start implementing strategies that facilitated the digital experience for customers outside of Mexico.

The first priority in attracting international demand was to communicate the Xcaret experience in local languages and facilitate online payment internationally.

"As we began to review options for CDNs, we realized that there is no network that provides greater coverage than Akamai. There is not even anything that compares," explains Héctor. "We needed to deliver this content to all these markets, even if it was Asia, with the same speed that we would do if the servers were installed in that same country."

xcaret.com

Grupo Xcaret
Cancun, Mexico
xcaret.com

Industry
Hospitality & Travel

Solutions
• App & API Protector
• Bot Manager

Key impacts
• Reduced application access complexity, improved performance, and increased security by replacing VPN

• Improved proactive malware prevention and reduced risk

• Increased operational efficiency of security team

Akamai

The higher demand brought with it distributed denial-of-service attacks, among other challenges, so the optimization of the websites and the capacities of the servers became crucial for Grupo Xcaret.

Héctor recalls that, thanks to Akamai, the proper functioning of the websites was never compromised, and conversion rates improved by up to 120%, making key markets even more valuable for the company.

With this rapid international expansion — and a changing environment due to external factors, such as the new provisions and policies of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the fluctuating laws in a specific market — Grupo Xcaret had to be constantly updating.

"Akamai has helped us a lot by being a guide in decision-making. We can better evaluate with data. There are providers of these services that are not supported by data but by trends, and the trend is not really important when it isn't supported by fundamental data," points out Héctor.

The challenges in the experiential tourism industry

In recent years, one of the main challenges for the tourism industry was the COVID-19 pandemic, which marked a before and after for many companies. But Grupo Xcaret faced challenges prior to COVID-19.

Eight years ago, just before starting its relationship with Akamai, the company faced various unauthorized agencies that sold Grupo Xcaret's products or positioned themselves with the company's keywords. One of their main solutions was to use several web domains for their different brands. Héctor is aware of the competitive advantage that this has been for the company: "All of this would not have been possible if we didn't have a CDN as versatile and powerful as the one Akamai offers."

Akamai offers strategic solutions

In 2019, Grupo Xcaret's began to be targeted by more sophisticated attacks — such as malicious code injection, among others — which intensified with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Akamai App & API Protector managed to keep Grupo Xcaret in a comfortable situation. "In 2020, with the pandemic, a large part of the tourism industry was attacked like never before, but even so, we did not see a situation as alarming as before Akamai's solutions," Héctor highlights.

And Akamai Bot Manager, in addition to helping Grupo Xcaret keep bots under control, helped the company make objective decisions thanks to the control and identification of bots on web pages, which has also caused a decrease in bounce rates and an increase in the quality of visits and time on the site. Héctor explains, "Sometimes a company may wonder why a channel is performing so badly, when in reality it is not the channel, but the behavior of the bots that avoid detecting these details for decision-making."

These solutions have significantly improved the performance of Grupo Xcaret's websites, with unexpected results for the company. "Since the implementation of Bot Manager, when clicking on 'buy' no longer takes a whole minute to get a response from the page. It's an incredible change, plus it's something we honestly weren't anticipating," says Héctor.

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Héctor Salceda
Deputy Director of eCommerce, Grupo Xcaret

From purchasing processes to providing web page parametric statistics, the support of Akamai experts has improved not only the experience of Grupo Xcaret, but also of their clients. This has been reflected in the comments on the page's satisfaction surveys. "The complaints that I have had after the implementation of Akamai solutions are almost zero, and in the circumstances in which it has happened, it has been more due to anti-fraud strategies, or other external issues," shares Héctor.

Future plans

For Grupo Xcaret, the key to a successful future is investment in product innovation. Over the next two years, they will seek a better positioning of the products within their portfolio in the hope of having a positive impact on tourism in Mexico through their digital commerce channels.

Beyond the continued use of Akamai's current solutions, the company plans to focus on consolidating payment method networks, so all customers can get a quote in their own currency, regardless of their country of origin. Also, with a larger content network and an increase in languages on its websites, Grupo Xcaret expects their international market to expand further.

These future plans will likely come to fruition under the guidance of Akamai, according to Héctor: "While we must do our due diligence and research all options in the market, I can say with total certainty that there is no option like Akamai. The solutions the company has, plus the quality of service it offers, are truly unparalleled."