



WHEN AI FIGHTS AI: THE NEW CYBERSECURITY BATTLEFIELD

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into cybersecurity is unstoppable, but it also raises questions about trust and control. How can we balance cutting-edge technology with reliable protection? Daniel Neuhaus, CEO, and Markus Ehrenmann, CTO of Open Systems AG, explain how transparency, a strong data foundation, and a “human-in-the-loop” approach can ensure comprehensive security in the age of AI.



Daniel Neuhaus
Chief Executive Officer
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Markus Ehrenmann
Chief Technology Officer
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Mr. Neuhaus, Mr. Ehrenmann, AI is everywhere right now, and many companies are wondering which partners can support them best on their journey into the AI-driven future. Why should they consider Open Systems?

Daniel Neuhaus: We distinguish ourselves from the competition in two key areas. First, we don't rely on isolated solutions but instead use a centralized platform. Many cybersecurity providers offer so-called 'point solutions'—standalone tools designed for specific functions like email security or access control. However, this fragmented approach often leads to increased complexity, higher costs, and a greater risk of misconfigurations. Effective security requires a holistic strategy. At Open Systems, we take a platform-based approach, unifying networking and security capabilities within a single, integrated solution. This not only enhances operational efficiency and transparency but also ensures greater stability.

And what is the second key differentiator?

Daniel Neuhaus: In a market increasingly defined by mergers and acquisitions, and the convergence of technologies, true differentiation now lies in the quality of service. That's why at Open Systems, we embrace a holistic 360° service model—seamlessly integrating advanced technology, operational excellence, and a superior customer experience. We believe AI delivers its full value only when combined with deep human expertise. This comprehensive approach hasn't gone unnoticed: Open Systems has been consistently recognized by leading industry analysts as a top provider in *Managed SASE*.

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What exactly is SASE?

Markus Ehrenmann: SASE stands for "Secure Access Service Edge" and combines network security and connectivity in a cloud-based model. It enables users to securely access applications and data regardless of their location. At Open Systems, we offer a fully managed SASE solution that is highly adaptable and meets the highest security standards. Looking ahead, we are investing in our strong data foundation and in diverse AI frameworks to continue providing our customers with the best possible, adaptive service experience.

Open Systems has been around for decades. How do you maintain a compelling customer experience even after 35 years in the market?

Daniel Neuhaus: It's essential not to focus solely on technology. A holistic customer experience is the result of a well-thought-out, future-oriented business model. This approach delivers significant efficiency gains for our customers—improving operational performance while optimizing Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), as well as the ability to meet regulatory requirements like NIS2 or DORA. Today's customers aren't looking for isolated products—they want a reliable, all-in-one solution that combines advanced technology with expert services. We've supported global market leaders like construction chemicals company Sika and systems provider GEA for many years in transforming their network and security architecture. This deep experience flows into every new project – structured, sustainable, and tangible.

Markus Ehrenmann: Trust is key. Customers want to know who they're working with. Does the partner have deep engineering expertise? Is the team stable? What's the turnover rate, and how is knowledge retained? Where does the partner recruit its talent, and what is the political environment in which it operates? How is data processed, stored, and protected? And is the company financially sound, or just a short-term player in the market? These and many other questions play a role in the decision-making process. Open Systems stands out through reliability based on a solid foundation – technologically, organizationally, and financially.

We are a Swiss company, operating in a stable and highly regulated market, with a strong foundation rooted here and a global reach. With our parent company, Swiss Post, we are positioned as a sustainable and reliable cybersecurity partner.

How exactly do you integrate AI into your platform and products?

Markus Ehrenmann: We take two complementary approaches to integrating AI, both of which we are constantly developing further. The first approach is using AI for real-time operational network security. This means our services provide secure, stable network performance by reliably detecting and blocking malicious websites, infected traffic, or phishing emails. We rely on classic machine learning techniques like pattern recognition and classification, combining insights from multiple analysis sources to ensure the most comprehensive protection possible.

And what is the second approach?

Markus Ehrenmann: We use generative AI based on our own operational data. In our daily operations, we collect extensive telemetry data – for example, which websites were accessed or blocked – supplemented with process data, often in unstructured text form. This data forms the basis for our various AI frameworks. We use it to develop specialized AI agents that act as virtual experts, capable of handling specific processes or customer requests. Combined, these agents form an intelligent copilot that analyzes data, uses diagnostic tools, and behaves like an experienced team member. The benefits for our customers are clear: faster response times, more efficient resource utilization, and consistently high or improving quality. A key advantage is our ability to aggregate and anonymize data across multiple customers. This enables us to detect threats early and implement preventive measures for others—forming a collective defense that continuously improves with each new insight.

How does AI specifically support your employees in their daily work?

Markus Ehrenmann: That's hard to generalize, as AI applications are evolving rapidly. Currently, we see three main application areas within our company. The first is rapid, comprehensive research: AI helps our employees gather information on market trends, technological developments, and documentation much faster and more thoroughly than manual efforts. The second is more efficient software engineering. For new projects (like Vibe Coding), AI copilots provide valuable support, though maintaining existing software still requires a careful, human touch. The third and perhaps most important area is improving quality and

response times in service and operations, allowing us to respond to customer inquiries and incidents more quickly and resolve them more accurately.

Why is this the most important area?

Markus Ehrenmann: Simply put, AI helps us to respond to customer inquiries more quickly and accurately, ensuring issues are solved faster. This allows us and our customers to focus more on truly critical decisions and workflows. This is one of the most important areas because faster issue resolution directly enhances operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. All these aspects contribute to our overarching goal: to foster the innovative use of AI tools so that our employees can work creatively and effectively, keeping us as an organization on the cutting edge.

Many experts emphasize that AI cannot function without human intelligence. You also mentioned the importance of human expertise earlier. How do you combine AI and HI (Human Intelligence) in your service?

Markus Ehrenmann: We take a clear "human-in-the-loop" approach: people stay in control. Every critical measure or change in our services is reviewed and approved by a certified Mission Control engineer – a member of our specially trained, highly specialized 24/7 network operations team. This ensures quality and accountability in the age of AI. At the same time, this process serves as a feedback loop for our AI copilot – human decisions help the system continuously learn and improve.

Transparency is also crucial: users are always informed when they are interacting with an AI agent, which builds trust and helps them better understand the context. Ultimately, our goal is to ease the burden on employees: AI takes on repetitive, error-prone, or tedious tasks – leaving more time for strategic consulting and creative problem-solving. This not only improves efficiency but also boosts motivation.

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What major developments do you foresee in the areas of SASE and AI, and how are you preparing for them?

Daniel Neuhaus: SASE is a platform approach that consolidates networking and security functions. The market is shifting from isolated perimeter solutions to integrated, cloud-native concepts where Zero Trust, automated threat detection, and proactive posture management – including AI – work together seamlessly. This reflects the growing demand for end-to-end transparency and scalability in hybrid IT environments, just like those we see with our customers.

AI, especially generative and domain-specific models, is fundamentally changing the threat landscape. While it boosts efficiency and automation, it also introduces new potential vulnerabilities. In security contexts especially, uncontrolled use of AI systems can increase exposure – through faulty outputs, unprotected model interfaces, or weak controls.

The user interaction with systems is also changing. Traditional user interfaces are fading into the background, while event- and outcome-driven workflows – often powered by AI or agentic frameworks – are coming to the fore.

AI is changing the game completely, also in SASE. That's why we focus on forward-thinking leadership and foster a culture of learning agility, adaptability, and entrepreneurial courage. Because the future remains uncertain.

Markus Ehrenmann: On another note, AI is boosting not just our efficiency – but also that of attackers. We're seeing a shift toward targeted network-level attacks and personalized phishing. Companies are undergoing a fundamental shift in their security posture: moving from perimeter-based approaches to Zero Trust, driven by SASE, MDR, and growing cloud adoption (IaaS, PaaS, SaaS). Security posture management is becoming central. We help our clients minimize their exposure during these transitions. Our solutions are co-created with a focus on usability, relevant features, and measurable value.

As Daniel mentioned, communication is also evolving – it's becoming more context-based and event-driven. We're developing agents that replace our old form-based portals and enable dynamic interactions. Generative AI accelerates

this evolution. Agents are taking over processes on platforms like Salesforce or ServiceNow, and we're opening up to interact with our customers' agents via secure interfaces. Because in a connected world, trust is the most valuable currency – and that's what we build on at Open Systems.



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About Open Systems:

Open Systems is a leading provider of native Managed SASE solutions, converging network and security functions on a cloud-native platform. Founded in 1990, the Swiss cybersecurity company, headquartered in Zurich, supports businesses and organizations in more than 180 countries with a holistic, customer-centric service model that guarantees 24x7 expert support. The combination of an innovative platform, integrated solutions, and excellent service ensures secure, reliable, and worry-free network operations – even within the complex IT infrastructures of global manufacturing companies and NGOs.

This solution delivers reliable connectivity across cloud, on-premises, and hybrid environments, while offering an exceptional user experience through an intuitive customer portal. Powered by a centralized data platform and 24x7 managed services, Open Systems not only enhances security but also boosts operational efficiency and accelerates innovation – enabling secure networks that grow with your business.

For more information, visit open-systems.com.



Open Systems provides Managed SASE solutions that combine networking and security functions on a cloud-native platform, securely connecting hybrid IT environments for greater efficiency, enhanced security, and maximum scalability.