



Durham County Council NHS partnership adopt AEP Netilla

AEP's Netilla Security Platform SSL VPN provides secure application access for Durham County Council NHS partnership.

Durham County Council (DCC) and the National Health Service (NHS) have formed a partnership aimed at strengthening ICT operations and enhancing services provided to both organisations. The partnership has focussed on looking for service and application synergies, streamlining operations where possible to increase efficiency and productivity while simultaneously reducing purchasing, installation and administration costs.

The Challenge

As part of the initiative the NHS started to utilise applications within the Durham County Council network and it quickly became apparent that the initial single server solution delivering a thin client environment was struggling due to increased traffic and utilisation. Allowing external access brought its own threats to the security of the network which meant that security became a higher priority.

Although both organisations have firewalls protecting the connection, there was a clear requirement from the NHS that a minimum number of ports be opened so that potential security threats were minimised, making administration and management simpler and less resource intensive. With all applications being 'web based' a decision was taken to try and alleviate the problem through the implementation of an SSL VPN Gateway solution which would reduce the number of open ports to the SSL port only

thereby offering significantly enhanced security and ease of management.

Initially DCC considered using Open Source offerings in order to keep procurement costs as low as possible. The complexity of delivering such a solution required extensive customisation and installation; combined with a tight implementation time frame this meant that a different approach was required.

The Solution

The AEP Networks Netilla Security Platform (NSP) was recommended to DCC by another UK local authority that had successfully been using the product for sometime and was impressed by its ease of installation, operation and value for money. DCC approached Enforce Technology, a leading security consultant and integrator, for help in devising an appropriate solution.

"Following a demonstration of the Netilla Security Platform we found that it integrated well into our Active Directory network meaning that time and resources allocated to administration could be significantly reduced. We also found that the AEP solution was extremely cost competitive compared to the proposed Open Source solution" commented Keith Hollins, Infrastructure Support Manager

Using the NSP's 'web' client the solution enabled the delivery of applications without the need to deploy software to the end device which would have been both time intensive and costly as the terminals themselves are located at a number of different NHS premises. Not having to worry about pre-installation of client software resulted in a seamless migration and instant connectivity and enabled the DCC to meet the project deadline.

DCC also found that the AEP NSP made managing user access privileges easier enabling administrators to create tailored application suites using a simple, easy to understand interface.

The final solution used two NSPs, one master and a failover unit ensuring high availability. Hollins continues “We provide services to organisations that are responsible for the public’s health and safety and we require safeguards in place should the worst happen. However, even with the growing number of users there has been no performance degradation and the AEP solution has proved both reliable and stable.”

About Durham County Council

Durham County Council is responsible for the provision of a wide range of public services to almost 500,000 people in County Durham. The Council also represents and promotes the interests of County Durham when dealing with regional, national and international affairs. It works closely with other public and private sector organisations in trying to achieve its mission ‘to make County Durham the best place in which to live, work and bring up a family’. It has played a major role in developing the county’s economy and creating new jobs, improving the environment and providing a wide range of services to meet the needs of the local community.

The Council’s ambition is to be a top performing council and it was successful in achieving an ‘excellent’ rating following the last Comprehensive Performance Assessment. Further information on the County Council and the services it provides can be found on the website at www.durham.gov.uk

About Enforce Technology

Enforce Technology are a specialist IT Security Integrator providing security solutions for both Governmental and Commercial organisations. In addition to providing network perimeter security for organisations, email, policy management, IDS/IPS & virus protection solutions can also be provided. The company also provides vendor independent consultancy and support.

For further information visit www.enforcetechnology.com, call 0121 558 7907 or email info@enforcetechnology.com.

About AEP Networks

AEP Networks, the specialist in network and application access security, delivers infrastructure security solutions that are easy to use and manage while offering exceptional value and mission-critical reliability. The company provides a full range of solutions, including identity-based application security gateways, highly secure VPNs, SSL VPNs and cryptographic key management products, to meet the most demanding requirements of public-sector and commercial customers around the world. A privately held company backed by leading technology investors, AEP Networks is based in Somerset, N.J., with European headquarters in London and a Government Solutions Group in Rockville, Md. Visit www.aepnetworks.com for more information.

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