The power of knowing

Christ the King is a highly successful Catholic Sixth Form College based in Lewisham, South East London. Established in 1992 the college was the first in the country to be awarded an "Outstanding" grade for overall effectiveness under the new Ofsted inspection regime. The college provides a broad curriculum for its 1,450 post 16 years' full-time students.

The Challenge

As a modern education establishment, Christ the King has embraced the latest developments in information technology to help in all aspects of management and administration of the college as well as in the delivery of a first-class education for its students.

Employing a small, full time team of IT management and support staff the college operates a Microsoft Windows based IT network to support the work of its 170 administration and academic staff. This includes access to a range of applications typically found in any modern business environment such as SAGE accounting, HR software and MIS systems.

In September 2009 Christ the King Sixth Form College expanded onto a second site in Sidcup, Bexley. The IT team was given the challenge of integrating the management systems of the two sites, which are physically located about 10 miles apart.

After taking advice from the independent advisory body JANET (UK), CTK's Computer Services Manager, Frank Manoharan, approached systems integrator

and IT services company Eurodata Systems to help with the work.

The Solution

Having carried out a similar project for Deptford based Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, Eurodata was able to provide CTK with an excellent local reference for a working solution, recommending the installation of a Celestix/Microsoft Intelligent Application Gateway (IAG) to provide a secure VPN link between the two colleges and enabling senior staff at the Sidcup site to access the network applications and files on the CTK network.

Mindful of the sensitive nature of some of the information held on the system, particularly staff and student personal records as well as financial and banking data, which needs to be kept secure at all times, Eurodata further recommended that in addition to the IAG's Active Directory based access system CTK should consider installing a secondary, two-factor authentication technology from Swivel Secure for added protection against possible data leakage.

Tokenless Two-Factor Authentication

Swivel's technology works by sending a random security string to the IAG login interface each time one of the staff wants to access a restricted area of the CTK network from a remote location.

In order to complete the login process the staff members must use their personal PIN allocated to them by the network administrator, together with the security string to generate a one-time- code for each session. This means that only the person holding the correct PIN will be allowed through.

Whilst not originally in the budget, Mr Manoharan recognised that data security is a growing concern for all organisations and that the risk of confidential information going astray was sufficiently high to justify the additional modest investment required to add the Swivel technology into the network architecture.

However having looked at other multi-factor authentication technologies he had some concerns about the practicality and usability of the system for the busy staff.

Working together with Swivel, Eurodata installed a trial system in August 2009, which after a trouble free two month period became a permanent fixture of the college's network best practice security policy.

Future Development

Initially Swivel is being used only by the senior staff who need regular access to confidential data and only when they need to login in to their terminal services or their personal desk top environment. However, future plans include possibly extending the system to all staff in the next two to three years as the network develops and could even be eventually rolled out to include the college's students at some point in the future.

The installation of the Celestix IAG/ Swivel solution has also brought added advantages for key staff. To use the secure SSL system staff only need an ADSL connection and an Internet browser running on a standard laptop or PC, which means that they are also able to work from home at evenings and weekends if necessary with full access to all their applications and confidential files.

As far as Mr Manoharan is concerned he believes that the new system has proved to be highly successful in the six months it has been in operation.

"The system recommended and installed by Eurodata has worked out to be a perfect solution to enable us to cost effectively, quickly and securely integrate the existing networks of the two colleges. The Swivel system is very easy to use and manage and I am confident that it will be very simple to upgrade when we need to in the future." Frank Manoharan.