

Birmingham City Council/Service Birmingham

Working together to enable mobile working

“The use of a mobile VPN has been integral to the delivery of agile working for our Mobile Workforce. The seamless ability to roam between various connections with little user interaction is proving invaluable; both in terms of keeping support to a minimum and the actual time users spend establishing a remote secure connection.”

Richard Murphy
Network Services Manager
Birmingham City Council

Overview

The challenge

To enable agile working for Birmingham City Council’s employees by supporting the Council’s agile working target and increasing the effectiveness of Council staff.

The solution

Through the implementation of Capita's NetMotion Mobility XE™ based Secure Mobile VPN (Virtual Private Network), Birmingham City Council is delivering a secure, seamless, easy to use and cost effective mobile solution to the workforce.

The results

Rapid adoption of the mobile solution by the Council’s employees who quickly identified work productivity benefits available combined with significant cost reductions for the Council.

The benefits

Capita’s NetMotion Mobility XE VPN has given Birmingham City Council a long-term solution that will help the Council reach their agile working targets; help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their workers whilst also reducing their costs.

Background

The Birmingham City Council's "Enabling Agile" mobile working project includes a number of imperatives to meet the requirements for mobilisation of end users. A key requirement was to provide secure mobile access from any connection for its 55,000 employees, ideally without impacting efficiency.

The City of Birmingham is covered by a wide range of high speed networks including BTs WiFi hotspots, Vodafone 3G/GPRS, Home broadband, Council WiFi and many other hotspots such as hotels and cafes.

The aim was to make all the networks available securely, using the most appropriate network to increase the effectiveness and productivity of Council staff.

Solution

“Capita IT Services recommended NetMotion Mobility XE as the most flexible and most appropriate VPN. We went through an evaluation process, scoring NetMotion against other products available and NetMotion scored highest. We therefore appointed Capita IT Services to complete the implementation,” highlighted Richard Murphy, Head of Network Services Manager at Birmingham City Council.

By using Capita's NetMotion Mobility XE based Secure Mobile VPN (Virtual Private Network) infrastructure service, Capita and Service Birmingham were able to deliver a secure, seamless, mobile solution to the Birmingham City Council workforce. The service was proven in exhaustive trials over eighteen months within the Council, together with Service Birmingham.

The solution offers Council staff flexibility to access back office applications, without change, using any network. Council users are empowered at the frontline point of activity by wirelessly enabling existing applications and virtually any application that works in a wired environment can now work wirelessly.

The unique seamless application roaming functionality means employees no longer have the inconvenience of interruptions due to connection breaks and subsequent application failures. Users connect to broadband at home to access their tasks for the day, and then roam seamlessly onto 3G/GPRS, WiFi and other networks.

Results

“The success of this project can be clearly seen with the massive uptake from Council employees who saw how the mobile VPN could and has changed the way they work for the better. We hit the original licence capacity within 2 months and that was through employees requesting the mobile VPN as a result of word of mouth,” highlighted Richard Murphy of Birmingham City Council. Richard continues, “Our target is for 17,000 agile workers within 3 years, our initial 1,100 NetMotion licences alone has significantly helped set us on the right path of reaching that target.”

The solution has freed Council employees from the complexities of handling multiple wireless connections. They roam across networks, traverse dead spots in coverage and even suspend and resume devices, all without losing data or logging in again, using any type of IP connection.

Reaching the agile workers target and helping employees be even more productive were key objectives of the project. However the Council has also seen a significant reduction in the operational costs of its cellular and ADSL broadband services through the Capita Secure Mobile VPN solution's efficiencies. This saving is estimated to be over 50% per year. Further savings have also been identified by the reduction in data transfer costs on the 3G/GPRS connections due to NetMotion Mobility XE link optimisation and compression sharply reducing traffic.

However above all else this solution has made technology complexity transparent to users and brought an increased level of productivity, flexibility and improved work life balance for the Council workforce.

“Moving forward, we also know that the solution implemented by Capita IT Services will work well for us. Not only is the product easy to use, it is flexible enough to cover the needs of our various workers whether home workers, flexible or office based,” highlighted Richard Murphy.

The solution tested and implemented at Birmingham City Council enables potentially all Councils and public sector organisations to meet the Government's drive for more effectiveness through mobile working.

Benefits

- Savings of up to 50% per annum on cellular and ADSL broadband services costs
- Additional savings through the reduction in data transfer costs as well as reduced support requirements and therefore reduced support costs
- Increased levels of productivity, flexibility and improved work life balance for the Council workforce with users accessing and moving seamlessly across multiple network types without interruption to their task at hand within a secure, VPN designed specifically for roaming users

- End users have the benefit of automatically using the fastest available connection and, even on slow speed connections like GPRS, or when the network is congested, enjoying faster application performance
- Ensuring key applications are always available for users, offering protection against connection loss and preventing subsequent application crashes with our application persistence
- All device access is locked down and secured for any network type, effectively making any network a trusted network
- Device health is secured by offering mobile Network Access Control (NAC) facilities that automatically remediate any outdated firewall, virus or malware protection
- Detailed level of control is provided by device, user and application for different conditions and security or performance profiles of different networks
- Full reporting facility provides analytics to offer not only real-time reports, but also alerts of exceptions to monitor applications, devices, users and network services for enhanced management and greater availability
- Designed to have the capacity to scale up easily to meet the needs of Birmingham Council's growing mobile workforce
- Accommodates the future Council plans to secure voice and video over suitable wireless connections

The Capita Group Plc
 71 Victoria St
 London SW1H 0XA
 Tel: 020 7799 1525
 Fax: 020 7799 1526
www.capita.co.uk

About NetMotion Wireless

NetMotion Wireless' software enables businesses and agencies to maintain and optimize connections to applications as their mobile workers move in and out of wireless coverage areas and across various networks. NetMotion's award-winning Mobile VPN, Mobility XE™, enhances mobile worker productivity for over 400,000 mobile users at more than 1,600 of the world's most respected organizations across multiple industries including utilities, healthcare, communications, public safety, local government, transportation and many others. For more information about NetMotion Wireless or its products, please visit www.netmotionwireless.com

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