

Isle of Wight College Establishes Secure Remote Access with Juniper Networks SSL VPN Solution

Organization:

Isle of Wight College

Industry:

Education

Challenge:

Secure, flexible remote access at the right price

Solution:

Juniper Networks Secure Access 1000 Series

Benefits:

- Key work resources are readily, yet securely available anytime, anywhere
- Achieved compliance with Data protection act
- Increased productivity
- Saved IT budget and management resources

"The Juniper Networks solution is exactly what IoW needs, at the right price. It is flexible and easily scales allowing us to provide remote access to more staff members without incurring significant capital or management overhead costs."

Rosie Quelch
Isle of Wight College
Networks Manager

Isle of Wight (IoW) College is the only Further Education establishment serving the island community of approximately 125,000 people off the South coast of England. It provides full- and part-time education courses for 16+ school leavers and adults, across a broad range of curriculum subjects. With a single campus plus four outreach education centres serving remote parts of the community, including the prison, the college currently has 3,000 full-time students.

The college operates a local area network (LAN) within the campus, which includes connection to the Internet. Although the students are largely located in a single place and the Internet connectivity is relatively easy to secure, the teaching staff often requires remote access to the LAN's resources while abroad on student recruitment trips, working from home or at the outreach centres.

As the college's network manager, Rosie Quelch, explains, remote access is very important: "Our LAN-based resources are fundamental to the teaching staff's day-to-day activity. They include corporate email and Webmail, shared work folders, student information, library resources, timetabling tools and Blackboard, the college's online learning resource where students post work for marking."

However, Rosie Quelch had been reluctant to provide widespread remote access to staff, because of the security threat to the LAN. In particular, the college ran the risk of contravening the data protection act by making student records available over an unsecured remote link. Therefore none of the LAN-based resources were made available to the teaching staff when they were working remotely.

Quelch thought a virtual private network (VPN) product might solve the problem, but ongoing evaluation of traditional solutions available in the market failed to meet IoW's specific requirements.

“Nothing seemed to fit the bill. Vendors could either offer a more flexible solution that was very expensive or a cheaper option that did not provide the required flexibility. We need a cost-effective solution that can be easily configured and administered to suit a wide range of users without requiring significant management resources, provide anytime/anywhere secure access on a global scale, but that is only accessible to our authorised staff.”

The Solution

IoW College became aware of a new remote access solution from Juniper Networks, thanks to targeted marketing activity by local reseller Network Alliance. Following consultation with Network Alliance, IoW College opted for a Juniper Networks Secure Access 1000 series SSL (secure sockets layer) VPN solution. Because the solution is clientless, each authorised user can be brought on-line without the need for new hardware or software installation. The solution enables authorised users to leverage the Internet as a cost-effective way to access network-based resources remotely, without risking their private network and data security.

The secure log-in process, via Active Directory, is extremely easy to use. Users at IoW College are able to find all their key network-based resources grouped together in a single pick-list option. These can be accessed, used, modified and shared remotely, without risk of the data being “hi-jacked” by an unauthorised third party or of the remote link being used by hackers to gain unlawful access to the college’s LAN. Rosie Quelch is also able to utilise the Juniper Networks solution for remote access when maintaining and trouble-shooting the network’s servers out of normal business hours.

The Benefits

The new deployment enabled IoW College to give more than 50 key staff members immediate remote access, regardless of their location.

Commented Rosie Quelch, “The Juniper Networks solution is exactly what IoW needs, at the right price. It is flexible and easily scales allowing us to provide remote access to more staff members without incurring significant capital or management overhead costs.”

Her teaching colleagues have warmly embraced the Juniper Networks secure access solution, because it is easy to use and resources can be found on-line in one place, regardless of the user’s location.

Quelch concluded, “Most importantly, I am assured that the Juniper Networks solution is protecting the entire network while providing immediate remote access to key data for authorised staff.”



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