



Warwick District Council

Warwick turns to Clearswift to keep council business secure

Overview

Warwick District Council (WDC) spans a wide area within the county of Warwickshire including the four main towns of Leamington Spa, Warwick, Kenilworth and Whitnash. The main council offices are situated in Leamington Spa and there are a further 10 key satellite sites, including leisure centres and art galleries, that are also included in the WDC IT network.

Within WDC, there are around 600 employees who use the IT system and between them they send and receive roughly 5,500 external emails daily.

Challenges

Email is used in widely varying degrees throughout WDC and while some areas of the organization are more reliant on the service than others, Lee Millest, Technical Architect at WDC comments: "We simply could not survive without email. Not only do we receive mails from the public via our website but we also rely on it to communicate with contractors and partner organizations. For so many areas of the council, such as the policy department, email is absolutely critical. If our email system ever went down, all of our services would be severely affected."

Furthermore, accountability is of enormous importance within the council where there is an awareness that since the organization is funded by public money, so there is an obligation to provide an e-enabled service to the residents 24 hours a day.

The Solution

Clearswift solutions were installed at WDC around 8 years ago in 1998. At the time, Millest was working as a trainee in the IT department and he eventually took over management of the Clearswift system in 2001. Millest has seen the use of email and the web change and progress during his years working at WDC but he has always placed an emphasis on the basic requirement for virus protection: "Email usage opens the gates onto your network and, being a public body, we simply cannot afford to be out of action for a single minute."

While Millest and WDC have looked at demonstrations for numerous other security providers, Millest explains "We have never found a compelling reason to change from the Clearswift system and that, combined with the knowledge that we have now built up around such a reliable and robust system, means that we can't envisage ever wanting to change providers."

WDC has not experienced any viral problems since installing MIMESweeper for SMTP. Millest comments: "MIMESweeper is proved to be extremely resilient in the threat detection field: we receive anti viral updates every hour." However, this obviously leaves the system exposed in the 60 minutes in between updates and Millest explains that Clearswift's method of combating this is a particularly positive feature of the service: "MIMESweeper's holistic approach to threat detection means that the system has the ability to block dubious looking files even before a virus signature is available which helps to ensure that no viruses can breach the system at any time."

WDC ensures that all external emails are channelled through MIMESweeper, including all those from the ever increasing number of mobile workers with laptops who are more susceptible to malicious attacks compared to staff with desktop PCs.



Company: **Warwick District Council**

Headquarters: **UK**

Industry : **Public**

Solution: **MIMESweeper SMTP Appliance CS1000**

No. of users: **600**

Concerns:

- **Virus protection**
- **Management of email content**
- **Restricted access of the internet**

"The need for virus protection is the most significant driver behind having an IT security system in place. While other functionalities, such as flexible policies, are extremely useful, the security set up is a key component of the IT infrastructure and WDC wouldn't have internet or email use without such a system in place. MIMESweeper is now a fundamental part of our IT recovery plan."

Lee Millest



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While the reliable virus protection aspect of MIMESweeper is the most important security element for WDC, the product offers other benefits. Millest explains: "The granularity of the policies system within MIMESweeper is also essential because of the incredible diversity of areas that council employees work in. The staff overseeing WDC's car parks, art galleries and leisure centres all fall under the departmental umbrella of 'leisure and amenities' but they are poles apart in terms of internet access and email usage requirements: a fitness instructor does not have the same IT needs as a curator or CCTV supervisor and the system is able to cater for this."

Policies include strict regulations regarding the use of profanities which ensures that unsuitable content within emails is automatically blocked. WDC has an 'Information Security policy document', in addition to the staff contract, which all employees must sign prior to working for WDC. Staff are also required to attend an IT induction course to educate them on the importance of best practice use for email and the web.

Millest and his team are responsible for the IT network throughout every WDC site and they find that another bonus of the MIMESweeper system is that it requires remarkably little maintenance time and configuration. Millest comments: "The mail system is extremely stable and while the web system is naturally a little more dynamic, due to the ever changing nature of web technology, upkeep time is kept to a minimum. We very recently swapped our ISP but absolutely no glitches were encountered with the MIMESweeper technology."

The Future

Millest is responsible for the smooth running of the new MIMESweeper SMTP Appliance which was installed in December 2005 and comments: "The new appliance system has brought with it significant cost savings because it no longer has to cater to every version of windows but has its own stable platform. We are now on the cusp of updating to the latest version of the appliance to maintain our faultless record in IT security."

"We are extremely transparent about employee access to the web and their use of email. While we do not monitor content as such, we do have restrictions in place and if there is an attempt to access information that is prohibited, the system will alert us to that fact. MIMESweeper means that the appropriate technology is in place to recognise, report and act on any issues that arise in this area. This comes back, once again, to WDC's position as a public body and having to be answerable to the public for our actions."

Lee Millest

About Clearswift

Clearswift simplifies content security. Our products help organizations enforce best-practice email and web use, ensuring all traffic complies with internal policy and external regulations. Our range of content filtering solutions makes it easy to deploy, manage and maintain no-compromise email and web security for both inbound and outbound traffic.

Clearswift is the only vendor to offer comprehensive, policy-based content security in all three deployment methods: as software, as an appliance and as a managed service. All three platforms are designed to take the hassle out of securing internet traffic, with a clear, intuitive management interface; automatic, 'zero-touch' updates; powerful reporting and common-sense policy management.

Twenty years of experience across 15,000 organizations has helped us raise security standards while simplifying security management at the same time. We've helped many of the world's most successful organizations use the internet with confidence and are committed to staying ahead of the market and helping our customers defend against all emerging threats.

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