Introduction

Originally founded in 1890, Hempsons are the largest specialist Health and Social Care legal practice in the UK. With four major offices located in London, Manchester, Harrogate and Newcastle. Hempsons have conducted more reported medical law cases in the UK than any other two firms combined. Every one of their 120 plus lawyers are involved in some way in the Health and Social Care sector.

In a highly regulated market sector, Hempsons sought a networking solution capable of meeting their high performance requirements. However, performance was only one of several drivers, the network also had to provide a high degree of control and automation in order to make their environment secure, flexible and easy to manage.

When looking for a solution, Hempsons needed a partner with extensive vendor knowledge, ensuring they made the best decision for the strategic direction of the company. For this, they turned to Enterasys’ partner NETprotocol, a company with over a decade of experience in delivering complex IT solutions to the legal market.

Institution’s Challenge

Based upon five year old Cisco networking equipment, the existing Hempsons infrastructure covered four locations. However, moving very much towards virtualisation, the health specialist lawyers required more visibility and control of their LAN. Additionally, the impact of stringent regulation processes, support for Voice over IP (VoIP) and the desire for improved user experience, the business needed an increase in the network’s performance, i.e. 10-Gigabit Ethernet.

Hempson’s IT manager, Brett Raymond said that the company’s four offices had virtualised heavily but the existing Cisco system wasn’t coping. “We were getting so many slow-downs and lock-ups that the complaints were increasing – particularly when it was taking 10-15 seconds just to open an email,” he said. “Lawyers need to get to their paperwork quickly and rely heavily on being able to access their files and documents, so it is understandable that they were getting frustrated.”

Therefore, Hempsons took the decision to upgrade their five year old network into something they knew would take them not only to the next level but also the next decade. Mike Batters, Technical Director of NETprotocol and IT consultant to Hempsons was called in to look at upgrading their network and was told not to address just the core technology – but the big picture. “Hempsons are the leading health and social care legal practice in the UK.”
social care law firm in the country and the demands on their system were getting heavier – and were likely to continue to do so for some time,” “he said. Budget was a consideration but the company knew that skimping on an upgrade could cost them in the longer term – hence their desire to look at how they could ensure a robust infrastructure for many years to come. “It would have been easy enough to look at upgrading the Cisco system because it was familiar technology and their IT management and staff understood how it worked, also the brand is well known and trustworthy”. While they evaluated other vendors, Hempsons chose to replace the Cisco network with an Enterasys solution.

**Enterasys Solution**

Hempsons decided to base their entire networking infrastructure upgrade on the Enterasys OneFabric architecture. The core of the network is centered upon Enterasys S-series modular switches, with B-series and A-series stackable switches at the access layer. Providing a network infrastructure that meets and exceeds Hempsons performance requirements. The Enterasys OneFabric Control Centre has been installed, enabling centrally located, highly granular, visibility and control over users, services and applications, helping to massively reduce the overall management burden.

After making his decision Brett Raymond said “When I got the comparison, Enterasys offered a much more feature-rich solution which was highly credible and came in at half the capital cost – which was a particularly nice surprise. We could have gone with upgrading Cisco and they could have addressed most of the issues but you don’t get so much for your money.” He continued “As the Enterasys network has delivered such immediate and significant benefits in performance, management and cost saving, Hempsons have been able to bring forward their planned Wireless Project, originally expected to start mid 2013 - starting almost immediately”.

It wasn’t only the initial cost saving that pleased him - the on-going management and maintenance costs will reduce considerably because of the simple delivery of the features. Plus the Enterasys system has some very contemporary features to make his life easier – such as social media interaction which means he will get a Tweet if hardware fails. “The system is interrogated through Twitter which means we can manage the system from a personal mobile phone. We have to make sure it is working 24/7 and to be able to do this through Twitter makes it so friendly from our point of view that we don’t need to carry around two devices all the time.”

**Results**

Reliance on technology is a given, which can mean businesses could assume keeping up with future demands can be costly. However, by choosing Enterasys, Hempsons were able to build a state-of-the-art network, meet the current and future needs of their customers and staff, while delivering significant savings to the business.

1. **Greater performance, visibility and ease of management.** Enterasys S-Series switches provide an always on, high performance network, assuring application availability. The OneFabric Control Center console provides complete visibility – from a single pane of glass – of the entire network making it easy for Hempson’s small IT team to manage the sprawling network. According to Raymond “It is a very easy system to understand, very intuitive. We can manage the system on less time and with higher control, meaning we have more time to develop other areas of the business.”

2. **Enhanced user experience while maximizing ROI.** Hempsons have built a stable infrastructure that allows staff to concentrate on their own jobs without worrying about network outages or performance issues. As far as the end user is concerned, the greatest benefit according to Raymond is that they hardly hear from them! “It would be very rare to hear anyone in the business tell us that our IT systems are great, but you soon hear from them if they aren’t working properly! The number of complaints has reduced considerably which means the help desk isn’t nearly so busy and can concentrate on proactive work rather than reacting to problems.” By choosing Enterasys, Hempsons are realising cost savings of around £80K in their first year with on-going maintenance costs reducing by £15-£20K per annum.

3. **Simple and scalable.** Timescales have also been accelerated for the introduction of new processes and systems for other areas of the Hempsons business such as compliance – a large part of their work with the 170 National Health Service (NHS) and other bodies they serve. Additionally, the company can now fast track the roll out of new Wireless LAN services, plus the implementation of a Bring Your Own device (BYOD) deployment. As Raymond says “With the Cisco system there are two platforms for wired and wireless and they speak the same language but with Enterasys this is all within one screen so there were no training issues and we can introduce wireless immediately rather than having to plan it into a new phase of the upgrade.”

According to Brett Raymond, Hempsons are delighted with their choice of Enterasys and very happy with the advice provided by NETprotocol, who encouraged him to look at the Enterasys system, rather than just upgrading the existing Cisco network.

“This really has answered all our needs not only for the immediate future but we believe for the next 7-10 years, so it will undoubtedly pay for itself when looking at all the capital and maintenance cost savings.”

**WANT TO LEARN MORE?**

For more information, call Enterasys Networks toll free at 1-877-801-7082, or +1-603-952-5001 and visit us on the Web at enterasys.com