



Gavin Henry, Managing Director at Suretec

Open source software is the way forward, especially for medium and larger businesses. It is fast being adopted by companies and local authorities alike, as it offers greater choice and flexibility, increased security, greater reliability and stability, lower technology costs - and the use of open standards means vendor independence.



The client

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) employs more than 8500 people, who have access to the authority's internal computer system. Hertfordshire is adjacent to Greater London on the north side and stands astride key routes between London and the major cities of the Midlands and the north. It covers an area of over 600 square miles and has an estimated population of over one million. Hertfordshire has one city, St Albans, and a variety of market towns, industrial towns, new towns, commuter villages and rural villages.



The Issue

Hertfordshire County Council's IT team was seeking direction and advice to upgrade its internal directory systems, including the security aspects of the systems used by all staff. The network is used across its range of departments, from libraries to fire services and highways and Hertfordshire County Council wanted to adopt an industry best practice solution.

All employees sign a form on joining HCC agreeing to the rules of access for the system; they agree only to access authorised web sites from their work PC, and to avoid all sites that can compromise the integrity of the HCC network. Sites to be avoided include social networking sites, and web-based email (such as hotmail and yahoo) which can bring risky software or viruses into the HCC system, and compromise its speed and integrity.

The Solution

Suretec looked at HCC's internet authentication and login system, and the needs of the IT security department to enable integrity, fast response and a centralised system.

Suretec identified OpenLDAP as the best option to do this job. In partnership with Symas Corporation, Suretec implemented Symas OpenLDAP at HCC to permit the security technicians to identify immediately any abuses of the system by users. The Symas OpenLDAP solution is packaged, tested and ready to run in any environment; it is self-contained and cost-effective, and certified for its purpose and server platform.


Background

Squid is an open source proxy-caching server and is used to optimise web delivery because it caches and stores frequently-used web content. As a result, it delivers savings on bandwidth and faster access for users. Consequently, Squid is used by hundreds of internet providers worldwide to give their users the best possible web access. Squid's instant access control is especially important in the public sector where councils can control user access, restrict file downloads and scan for viruses and malware to protect their system.

Suretec also provided support and consultancy to HCC for their web proxy system based on Squid and related technologies, in partnership with Xenion. This is used to optimise online access to the authority's 50 public libraries, each of which has a cyber café which is well used by the public.

Once the system was installed, Suretec was engaged to provide 365-days-a-year backup and support for the Squid and Symas OpenLDAP system. Suretec's contracts to support both systems were renewed once the first year was complete and HCC was eager to renew for a second term – supporting its efficient and secure open-source internet access infrastructure.

Symas Corporation's OpenLDAP is increasing its worldwide recognition as a premier Enterprise Directory solution and is currently used by a diverse group of companies such as Hewlett-Packard, Fidelity National Information Services, Lincoln Financial Group, Carrillion Health System, Stanford University and many others.

Xenion Communications is a West-Australian owned and operated business specialising in Internet network design, hosting and access. Xenion was formed by one of the Squid Developers, Adrian Chadd, and its goals include providing professional network and network application design, support and infrastructure. 

Client testimonial



Nigel Brown, IT security analyst at HCC,

HCC is a big user of open source software on its network because we know it is cost-effective and less open to viruses and other threats than proprietary software. We have been very pleased with the new system and the support we have seen from Suretec. It represents high performance and great value.

We selected Suretec as we know they are the leading UK company supporting these two open source systems, and we had a track record of successful working with Suretec.

