

The Organization

CLIC Sargent
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The Challenge

- Flexible and secure remote access

The SonicWALL Solution

- SonicWALL Aventail E-Class
SSL-VPN EX-1600

The Results

- Secure remote access to applications, files, email, databases, and corporate intranet
- Remote user access from home PCs and mobile laptops
- Round-the-clock productivity
- Lower total cost of ownership (TCO)

A leading UK children's cancer charity, CLIC Sargent® offers a wide range of specialist care and support services tailored to the needs of young cancer patients and their families throughout every phase of treatment and beyond. Additionally, CLIC Sargent funds ongoing psycho-social research, and advocates in support of young cancer patients and their families with government and the media.

CLIC Sargent is a geographically dispersed organization with offices throughout the UK, connected back to a head office in London via MPLS WAN architecture and LES circuits. CLIC Sargent's back-office infrastructure at its head office is virtualized using VMware Virtual Infrastructure 3 and currently supports 25 servers. The network provides access to MS Office applications, a fundraising donor database and a SUN Accounts system, as well as content-filtered Internet Access for all users and a handful of other smaller applications.

The challenge: Flexible and secure remote access

Recently, CLIC Sargent gave a number of users the option to work from home on an occasional basis. These users needed the same access to the same resources remotely as they have working on their office-based machines.

"We wanted a secure and easily understandable way that our users, many of whom are not comfortable with using computers, could access our system from their homes," said Darren Hurst, IT Manager at CLIC Sargent.

Hurst had previously deployed hardware-based VPNs over ADSL to connect small office/home office (SOHO) workers to the corporate network. Outlook Web Access provided external mail access. Hurst had already deployed Terminal Services internally, but wanted a more thorough level of security for external remote access.

"We considered simply publishing Terminal Services externally," said Hurst, "but we wanted to implement a level of control where we were sure that unmanaged endpoints that were connecting to the corporate infrastructure were not riddled with viruses or spyware."

Hurst's team had also found that having to get individual PSTN lines and ADSL services installed for each home-based VPN user's hardware was expensive and time consuming to set up. Additionally, the solution offered no flexibility if the user needed to work from a different end point location.

Hurst also recognized that Outlook Web Access, while easy to use, did not provide the complete features of a full Outlook installation over Terminal Services, and the majority of remote users also wanted full access to their files and the corporate database.

The solution: SonicWALL® Aventail® E-Class SSL-VPN EX-1600

In evaluating a solution, Hurst was particularly interested in superior endpoint analysis controls, and so decided upon implementing SSL VPN. He engaged the assistance of London-based service provider AIS in selecting an SSL VPN solution. Ultimately, Hurst's short list came down to the Juniper® SA 2000 and the SonicWALL Aventail E-Class SSL-VPN EX-1600.

"With the EX-1600, we are able to make significant hardware and training cost savings over our previous configuration for outside access to our network because we no longer have to provide external hardware and communications lines."

– Darren Hurst
IT Manager
CLIC Sargent

SonicWALL Benefits:

- Easy-to-deploy clientless remote access
- Easy-to-use secure Web portal
- Granular access control
- 3G cellular wireless support

"We tested the Juniper box, but found that SonicWALL gave us a much greater success rate in detecting up-to-date anti-virus products on the end users' machines," said Hurst.

Hurst's team initially implemented the SSL-VPN EX-1600 for a handful of users on a trial basis, but was then authorized on a per-user basis whenever a user requested access to work remotely. The IT department provided users with short one-to-one training over the phone as well as links to written documentation.

By integrating the EX-1600 with existing Terminal Services and Active Directory authentication, Hurst provided employees and contractors with secure remote access to the corporate intranet, corporate database, and Microsoft® Office and Outlook applications from their small office or home PCs and laptops. Different departments receive access to different applications depending on their needs. Third-party contractors only receive access to the resources they support.

The EX-1600 now currently supports approximately 50 internal and external users, but that number is continually expanding as Hurst's team decommissions existing hardware-based VPNs. Hurst plans to eventually extend SSL VPN access to all 350 staff members.

The results: Increased productivity and lower costs of ownership

CLIC Sargent's employees and partners have found the SonicWALL solution easy to use, increasing productivity.

"After deploying SonicWALL, we get fewer help requests," said Hurst, "The EX-1600 is also easy to manage for our IT team, and adds confidence that there is little chance of access by virus-ridden machines."

At the same time, the EX-1600 has reduced IT overhead and lowered total costs of ownership.

"SonicWALL has eliminated the costs of having to set up VPN clients, install telephone lines and activate ADSL," said Hurst. "With the EX-1600, we are able to make significant hardware and training cost savings over our previous configuration for outside access to our network because we no longer have to provide external hardware and communications lines."

The EX-1600 has also provided the additional productivity benefit of employee access to business applications from remote locations at any time of day. SonicWALL's granular Access Controls also enabled Hurst to restrict external third-party contractors to only be able to manage the resources they support, and present them in a clear manner using the Web-based Workplace portal interface.

"We were also impressed that we could set up rules to detect anti-virus on other operating systems apart from Windows," said Hurst.

The future: SSL VPN over 3G

Hurst has also recently deployed Vodafone 3G cellular wireless cards to a handful of laptop users. By providing them with SSL VPN and Terminal Services, they now also receive the same level of access on the move as if they were in the office.

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