



The **specialist** in network and application access security

CASE STUDY

Remote and Home Working Booms as AEP Helps Local Authorities Reach £6.45bn Cost Savings Target

A government requirement for ambitious efficiency gain savings of £6.45bn by 2007/08 (as set out in the 2004 Spending Review) is one of the main factors driving the boom in local authority investment for secure remote application access technology. And North Norfolk District Council is just the latest of a growing band of councils ready to go live with their flexible working solution from AEP Networks - the specialists in network and application access security.

According to the Society of IT Management (Socitm), since 2000, councils have spent some £2.5 billion on eGovernment projects, supported in England by £675m of ODPM central funding, and the government is now demanding that councils generate significant ROI on that investment.

AEP Networks has also seen a marked increase in demand for their Netilla Security Platform secure application access (SSL Virtual Private Network) products. Behind this surge is the fact that more local authorities are coming to realize that the UK legislative requirements to consider requests from parents to work flexibly from home, or on the move, actually provide a better fit with their future service delivery strategies of delivering services 24/7, anywhere within a Council's boundaries (even a

client's home), rather than the traditional framework of centralized office based staff.

AEP Networks provides easy-to-use Web-based VPN technology which is fast and secure and facilitates both mobile and teleworking, which could enable councils to meet those savings targets.

"Demand is red hot in the local government sector as word has got around that there are real benefits to offering flexible working to staff, Members and external service providers. Within a very short time councils are seeing a return on investment as well as a great boost in staff morale," says Jan Vekemans, AEP Vice President of Sales, EMEA.

A survey of European public sector managers says the average public sector IT budget in 2004 increased by 6%, three times the growth rate in the private sector. Forrester Research identified one of the key areas the money is being spent on is virtual private networks, with 30% of public sector organizations considering introducing such networks, while 18% are already using them.

These figures have been backed up by the large number of local authorities who have taken on secure remote application access from AEP Networks. A partial customer list includes: Cambridgeshire County Council, Wigan Metropolitan Council, North Wiltshire District Council, Mole Valley District Council, Hambleton District Council, Staffordshire Borough Council, Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council, Newcastle City Council, Cherwell District Council, Dorset City Council, Lancaster City Council, Dundee City Council, South Lanarkshire

Council, Ipswich Council, Limavady Borough Council and Rochdale Metropolitan Council.

Traditionally, remote working has been sold on the benefits of reduction in office space requirements and saving of traveling time, however the recent launch of a national project - Project Nomad on 10th February 2005 - gave a hint of some of the real benefits to come from the technology, as one case study on integrated assessment for residential and non-residential care where clients needs are assessed and records updated electronically in their homes reported:

- Process time savings of 29%
- Average office based time reduced by 47%
- Phone calls querying assessments have dropped from around 80% to around 1% of cases
- Payment process and collection enhanced – client acceptance of charge during visit avoids large retrospective bills

An early adopter of the technology was North Wiltshire District Council, which uses a Netilla Security Platform from AEP Networks to support home-working for key staff. The Council was keen to provide flexible working for staff in the benefits assessment office, following an alarming increase in staff turnover.

“The network allows home-workers to access the full range of council applications, together with email, the intranet and the Council’s computerized telephone network. In some cases, productivity has risen by more than 20%.” Says Dave Lovelock, the Council’s ICT Strategy and e-government officer. “It

also requires no IT support and you can add new users in minutes.”

North Wiltshire is also extending the network to allow key suppliers access for remote diagnostics and troubleshooting.

AEP Networks has recently grown out of a merge between Netilla Networks and AEP Systems, enabling the company to now offer secure application access (SSL VPN) products to enable convenient, “anywhere, anytime” Web-based secure access to corporate resources as well as highly secure IPSec-based VPNs which are designed for site-to-site secure communications optimized for public sector and financial markets.

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Dave Lovelock
Strategy and E-government Officer

It can help local authorities to build to either UK Government “Enhanced Grade”, or “Baseline Grade”, standards for large-scale, public sector networks and its latest product is the Netilla Secure Gateway Appliance-M, a compact, inexpensive secure application access solution expressly designed to increase security for deployments of Microsoft® Outlook® Web Access (OWA), the dominant Web-based email application. A recent report from Gartner highlighted the need for organizations to secure their OWA deployments, citing SSL VPNs with reverse proxy configurations (which the AEP product has) as a “best practice” to accomplish that goal.



About AEP Networks

AEP Networks, the specialist in network and application access security, delivers infrastructure security solutions that are easy to use and manage while offering exceptional value and mission-critical reliability. AEP Networks was formed as a result of the merger between AEP Systems Ltd and Netilla Networks Inc. in 2004. The company provides a full range of innovative secure networking and application access products to meet the most demanding requirements of public-sector and commercial customers. A privately held company backed by leading technology investors, AEP Networks is based in Somerset, N.J., with European headquarters in London.

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS	GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS GROUP
AEP Networks 347 Elizabeth Ave., Suite 100 Somerset NJ 08873 Toll-Free: 1-877-638-4552 Tel: +1 732-652-5200	AEP Networks 40 West Gude Drive, Suite 200 Rockville, MD 20850 Toll-Free: 1-800-495-8663 Tel: +1 240-399-1200
EUROPE	ASIA-PACIFIC
AEP Networks Focus 31, West Wing, Cleveland Road Hemel Hempstead Herts HP2 7BW U.K. Tel: +44 1442 458 600	AEP Networks 2107 Tower 2 Lippo Centre 89 Queensway Hong Kong Tel: +852 2845 1118
JAPAN	
JOYO Bldg 6-22-6 Shimbashi Minato-ku Tokyo 105-0004 Japan Tel: 81-3-3432-3336	

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