



STRATFORD-UPON-AVON COLLEGE

A seamless solution with AppGate Security Server

Background

Stratford-Upon-Avon College, based near the centre of Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, attracts students from across the UK and abroad. As with many other colleges and universities, Stratford College is making increasing use of on-line resources and technology to enhance teaching and provide support for students. However, in 2005, Stratford College proposed a ground-breaking project to team with the Warwickshire Library and Information Service and create a unique on-line network for their students.



"The first challenge was to convince the people in Warwickshire County Council that any solution would be secure for both them and ourselves. Their initial reaction was that the networks should not be linked together. I looked for a solution to provide a tunnel through the council network, which would have minimal impact on the installed base of PCs in the libraries.

I found it with the AppGate Security Server. It uses Java technology in the desktop environment which enabled me to convince the council that we could implement a viable solution without impacting their network"

Paul Urmston
Network Systems Manager
Stratford-Upon-Avon

The initial concept was to connect the College network to Warwickshire Council's library IT network so that students could use the computer facilities at their local library to access the college and classroom environment. Many Stratford College's students live off-campus and widening the college's network would allow students to work remotely without having to travel in to the campus. The college's vision was to create a remote learning centre - a simple to use, seamless, remote access network enabling students to sit down and work within the Warwickshire County Council library as if they were sitting down at the college and working on their own college desktop.

Requirement

Security was a key requirement when the College began looking for a solution. The students would be accessing the College network from a public environment and the system would need to protect the College's infrastructure from potential viruses, and provide a secure, confidential environment for students to work and communicate with lecturers. It also had to prevent unauthorised access to restricted information, whilst also enabling controlled access to restricted areas, such as the administration services, to allow staff to work remotely.

In addition, the system needed to be flexible enough to integrate easily with local applications and services at the college, such as Microsoft Active Directory. It also needed to integrate into the library systems without any changes at all, enabling other libraries across the county to participate in the scheme easily. Finally, the college also required the ability to print locally when accessing the college's network from a library computer.

The Solution

The AppGate Security Server provided a comprehensive and easy-to-manage solution that met all the requirements of the system for Stratford College, unifying all the necessary security elements such as Application Level VPN, Client Check, Local Secure Print and critically, Clientless Access.





"The technology behind it is stunning...we believe this is the first time that a local council network has been used to access a college network and classroom environment, from a remote location simply using standard library desktop computers. The solution is unique because it does not require any additional software to be installed on the library machines. It is therefore expandable and can be used at any participating library or remote location."

Julie Taylor
Project Manager
Stratford-Upon-Avon
College

appGATE™
NETWORK SECURITY

"Amazingly, it was remarkably free of hitches for a project of this kind...There were some hiccups during the development stages, for example when we first tried to print a document at the library it materialised miles away at the college! But GSS and AppGate resolved these challenges one by one."

Linda Smith
Area Manager
Warwickshire Library &
Information Service

GSS, an AppGate partner with expertise in network security within the education sector, managed the project to implement the AppGate solution, working closely with both Warwickshire Libraries and Stratford-upon-Avon College from the initial development stages through to final testing and sign-off.

From the user's perspective, the AppGate solution has delivered a simple system to use. Students use their library membership login to access library services and one of the options is to connect through to the college classroom environment using their student id.

The Future

The same solution is going to be deployed for the new 250 student accommodation blocks on the campus to allow the broadband enabled PCs in the student rooms to link into the College systems giving them the same classroom environment.

Senior managers at the College are currently being equipped with new PDA devices which will connect over GPRS using the AppGate Mobile Client to access their email.

AppGate Network Security

In a world with fewer borders, the demand for network security changes from security at the perimeter to security at the source. AppGate is the leader in this space with a solution that protects applications and communication as well as securing end-point devices. The AppGate solution supports all types of networks; fixed, wireless and mobile and is easily integrated into existing customer environments. AppGate has customers in 19 countries, many from market segments like defence, government and Fortune 500 companies.

How We Did This...

An unusual feature of this project was the requirement to extend the secure network outwards as opposed to having remote workers connecting inwards. The library computers used a form of anonymous PK login using key-pairs generated by the Security Server; this effectively meant that the machine, not the user, 'logged-in'. The access rules engine was used to ensure (by IP address) that only connections from the library's network were permitted to use this form of authentication. Once the secure connection had been established, then the user was presented with the normal Windows terminal server login - exactly as they would in the college classroom environment.

