



# CASE STUDY



## LAN 2 LAN secure broadband helps Waltham Forest Council raise education standards



### THE CHALLENGE

Enable Waltham Forest Council to meet government targets to provide broadband for schools and help it achieve its ambition to improve education in the borough.



In 2002 Waltham Forest Council introduced a comprehensive, five-year plan to improve education management and delivery for 35,000 school children in the borough. The Council's goal is "to raise aspirations, expectations and standards so that all young people achieve their full potential and thereby increase employability and improve life chances". To achieve this, information technology would play a key role in a number of areas – improving learning for pupils, providing greater access to information for teachers, supporting education administration and as a curriculum subject itself.



Waltham Forest Council was already well ahead of the government's targets to bring broadband Internet connectivity to 40 per cent of UK schools by 2005. By the end of 2002, the Council had connected all of its 92 primary, junior and secondary schools in the borough with its 92Mb Internet access. With better and faster connectivity came the problem of security – particularly with regard to children. Waltham Forest Council needed a simple-to-manage and robust way of controlling Internet access.



"Technology like broadband is important in helping us improve education and employment prospects for our children. But the threat of abuse and access to unsuitable material is a major issue. There are many security products on the market, but what made the LAN 2 LAN solution ideal for Waltham Forest Council was the fact that it provides excellent security, it is simple to use and it doesn't need expensive support in the future. This kind of technology enables us to deliver a quality service and value for money to the community"

PRIYAL SHAH, WALTHAM FOREST COUNCIL

### BENEFITS OF LAN 2 LAN'S IT SOLUTION FOR EDUCATION

- Helps Waltham Forest Council deliver improved standards in education
- Enables worry-free broadband connectivity for schools throughout Waltham Forest
- Supports Best Value objectives by developing a high-quality solution with a low-level support requirement
- Implements leading-edge firewall and Internet security technology within existing budgets



## THE SOLUTION

LAN 2 LAN recommend and install a network security system from BorderWare Technologies called MXtreme, which delivers a high level of Internet security - within existing budgets – which is easy to manage and meets Best Value objectives.

Through the National Grid for Learning and the London Grid for Learning schemes, the government helps Local Education Authorities to introduce broadband Internet technology for schools. In Waltham Forest this is managed by EduAction, a joint venture between private and public organisations. In the Waltham Forest borough, EduAction was responsible for installing a broadband, wide-area communications network. As well as creating links between schools and educational establishments in the borough it also provides a link to the Internet. It has given all pupils and teachers in the borough their own email addresses, file storage and Internet access. The Council acts as an Internet service provider to the schools in the borough, so that all Internet access is via the Council's IT department where security is managed.

In September 2002, EduAction called in network security experts LAN 2 LAN to help resolve the security issue. After reviewing Waltham Forest's needs, LAN 2 LAN recommended MXtreme, a network firewall product with BorderWare security software. It was one of the most advanced products of its kind on the market and Waltham Forest Council was the first organisation in the UK to install the technology. MXtreme acts like an electronic air-lock between the borough's network and the outside world. It can be configured easily to filter out specific material and email traffic deemed to be inappropriate. However, it is also sensitive enough to recognise legitimate educational information on subjects like art or biology.

## THE RESULTS

Today, Waltham Forest has one of the most advanced broadband networks for schools in the UK. It has had a significant impact on improving learning for children, supporting teachers and facilitating administration for education managers in the borough. Importantly, those managing the network (as well as teachers and parents) know they have a reliable and flexible system to manage security for children. This has been achieved within existing budgets.

The MXtreme security system has been a good example of how Waltham Forest Council is meeting both the government's vision

for broadband and the local government Best Value objectives. Waltham Forest now has a resilient Internet security system which it can manage itself without having to call upon external and expensive technical expertise.

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Children in the borough use the broadband network to access the rapidly growing of number learning support websites such as the BBC's Schools site which offers interactive learning for pre-school children up to those preparing for GCSEs. Broadband is critical because of the increase in interactivity and the use of audio and visual content such as video.

However, with easier and faster access to more visual information, both teachers and parents are confident that the MXtreme security system is protecting children.

Teachers are starting to use the Internet to support classroom learning. With broadband, a class of 30 children can be on-line simultaneously without impairing access or download times. For teachers themselves, the Internet is a valuable resource for teaching practice. They can access information such as teaching aids, lesson plans and worksheets. Teachers can also share knowledge and experience with one another. Increased network capacity enables quicker access to the information teachers need and the ability to download large amounts of information quickly.

The network is also making administration more efficient by enabling larger amounts of information to be sent around the borough electronically. For example, information on a pupil who moves to a new school can quickly and easily be sent from the old school to the new one. Improved Internet access also enhances teaching IT to children since learning about, and using modern technology reflects the kind of IT environment children will be expected to understand once they leave school and start their working lives.



5 GENESIS BUSINESS PARK WOKING SURREY GU21 5RW  
TELEPHONE 0870 787 4001 FACSIMILE 0870 747 4002  
info@lan2lan.com  
www.lan2lan.com

