



Stratford-upon-Avon College

AppGate connects college and library for remote learning

Education | Extranet Security | AppGate



Background

Stratford-upon-Avon College in Warwickshire attracts students from across the UK and abroad. In common with other colleges and universities, Stratford-upon-Avon College is making increasing use of on-line resources and technology to enhance teaching and support for students. However, in 2005, the 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 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 their classroom environment. Many students at the college live off campus and widening the college's network would enable them to work remotely without having to travel in to the campus. The college's vision was to create a remote learning center – a simple to use, seamless, remote access network enabling students to sit down and work within a Warwickshire County Council library as if they were at the college and working on their own college desktop.

Requirement

Security was a key requirement as students would be accessing the college network from a public environment. The system would need to protect the college's infrastructure from potential viruses, provide a secure and confidential environment for students to work and communicate with lecturers and tutors, and prevent unauthorized 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 to integrate easily with local applications and services such as Microsoft Active Directory at the college. It also needed to integrate into the library systems without any changes at all, so that other libraries across the county could participate in the scheme easily.

And finally, the college required the ability to print locally when accessing the college's network from a library computer.

Solution

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

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GSS, an AppGate partner with expertise in network security within the education sector, managed the implementation of the AppGate solution, working closely with Warwickshire Libraries and the college from the initial development stages through to final testing and sign-off.

"The first challenge was to convince Warwickshire County Council that any solution would be secure for both them and ourselves", said Paul Urmston, Director of Information Technology Services at Stratford-upon-Avon College. "Their initial reaction was that the

"I needed 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, which uses Java technology in the desktop environment."

Paul Urmston
Director of Information
Technology Services
Stratford-upon-Avon
College



"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."

Julie Taylor
Project Manager
Stratford-upon-Avon
College

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."

"The technology behind it is stunning," added Julie Taylor, Project Manager for Stratford-upon-Avon College. "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."

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.

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.

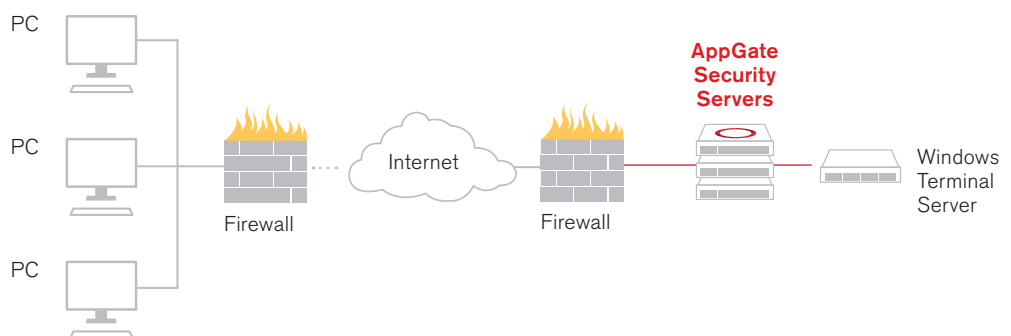
Senior managers at the college are currently being equipped with new PDA devices which will connect over GPRS using the AppGate Mobile Client to access their email.

Tips and Tricks

An unusual feature of this project was the requirement to extend the secure network outwards as opposed 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.



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