



Bracknell Forest Council

By deploying Novell® ZENworks® Endpoint Security Management, Bracknell Forest Council gained robust and flexible control over security on workstations, laptops and portable storage devices. The Novell solution assisted the Council in complying with the UK Government GCSx Code of Connection ahead of the national deadline.

Overview

Bracknell Forest Council is a unitary authority in Berkshire, approximately 30 miles from central London, UK. The organisation is responsible for providing a broad range of local government services—including education, social services, environmental protection and business development—to its more than 120,000 inhabitants. The Council's activities are funded chiefly through local taxation.

Challenge

The UK government is engaged in a major transformation and integration project which includes the establishment of trusted links for communication between different departments. The main goals are to enable new economies of scale through shared services, and to better identify opportunities for service improvements.

To ensure that classified information could be exchanged securely with local authorities, the UK government created the GCSx Code of Connection (CoCo): a list of approximately 90 security controls with which all local authorities must comply in order to connect directly with the central government intranet.

The first central government department to require CoCo compliance was the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which set a deadline of 31st March 2009.

The internal housing benefits team at Bracknell Forest Council needed to ensure that it could connect to the secure GCSx network, and the challenge for the IT department was to ensure full CoCo compliance within this demanding timeframe. This would mean not only maintaining security within the data centre and internal network, but also extending checks and controls right to the very boundaries of the Council's network, including offsite workstations, laptops and portable data storage devices.

Solution

Bracknell Forest Council has more than 30 office locations, and many of its 1,400 computers are laptops that are also used in home offices and on the road. Approximately 80 executive staff have BlackBerry* handhelds, and the use of personal USB data storage devices is widespread.

"Our emphasis in the past was on accessibility and ease of use, so we had taken a fairly hands-off approach in giving staff the freedom to customise their own working environments," said Ian Slee, CTO, Bracknell Forest Council. "With the proliferation of portable storage devices and the emergence of free WiFi connections came a number of new security threats—and we needed to tighten our network control to ensure CoCo compliance."

Bracknell Forest Council at a glance:

Unitary authority in central Berkshire

■ Industry:

Government

■ Location:

UK

■ Products and Services:

Novell ZENworks Endpoint Security Management

Novell ZENworks Configuration Management

■ Results:

- *Helped achieve GCSx Code of Connection compliance within tight deadline*
- *Enforced security policies to the edge of the network*
- *Enabled direct connection to secure central government intranet*

"We were impressed by the ease of use of Novell ZENworks Endpoint Security Management—it was clear that it would do what it promised and that we could rapidly deploy the software to meet the deadline required by the DWP."

Ian Slee

CTO

Bracknell Forest Council



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Bracknell Forest Council selected Novell ZENworks Endpoint Security Management to monitor all devices connected to its network and enforce central security policies on them.

“We were impressed by the ease of use of Novell ZENworks Endpoint Security Management—it was clear that it would do what it promised and that we could rapidly deploy the software to meet the deadline required by the DWP,” said Slee. “Using the Novell solution, we are enforcing VPN connectivity from laptops used outside office locations, and ensuring that all USB storage devices are fully encrypted.”

In addition to “locking down” hardware according to centrally managed security policies, the Novell solution provides full reporting on activity at the boundaries of the network. CoCo status will be reviewed by central government on an annual basis, and the ability to run network audits using Novell ZENworks Endpoint Security Management should make it easy and cost-effective for the Council to demonstrate compliance.

Results

Novell ZENworks Endpoint Security Management is one of several Novell technologies that helped Bracknell Forest Council achieve CoCo compliance ahead of the DWP deadline. The solution ensures that only council-owned devices that connect

through a VPN are able to access the GCSx network. In addition, the Council is using Novell ZENworks Configuration Management to prevent the installation of unauthorised software, and to keep workstations and laptops updated with the latest security fixes.

“Novell ZENworks Endpoint Security Management has significantly helped us to address a number of the CoCo requirements by providing robust and flexible security control over workstations, laptops and portable storage devices,” said Slee. “It has also enabled us to address some other areas of perceived vulnerability outside CoCo.”

The speed of deployment and ease of use of the Novell solution were key success factors for the project—first, because they enabled the Council to meet the tight deadline, and second, because they reduced the cost and effort of achieving compliance.

“Choosing this pre-built solution from Novell helped us to get our housing benefits team connected to the DWP’s secure systems within the deadline,” said Slee. “We expect that other departments will follow suit: CoCo compliance means that we can exchange information more easily and at lower cost with partner organisations in central government, while ensuring high security for sensitive data.”



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