



## Success Story

### Chewton Glen Hospitality WiFi

#### Overview

##### Profile

Sector: Hospitality

Website: [www.chewtonglen.com](http://www.chewtonglen.com)

##### About

An English Original... Chewton Glen is a luxury country house hotel and spa set in 130 acres of Hampshire countryside on the edge of the New Forest National Park, and just a few minutes' walk from the sea. A very special place, Chewton Glen is a proud member of

Relais & Châteaux, is one of the finest luxury hotels in the UK and has been voted 'One of the Top Hotels in the World' and 'Best Hotel in the British Isles' - at the 2010 Condé Nast Traveller annual readers awards.

##### Products

The core products supplied to the Chewton Glen were Access Points, SPARK Server, SPARK Software and customisation pack, Internet access routers and IT infrastructure.

Highly reliable access points were used with extremely efficient radio coverage and an ability to communicate in areas of the hotel normally difficult to reach. In conjunction with the SPARK Server, a high performance HP Machine was deployed. An industrial grade system with dual processor, RAID disks and LINUX as an operating system. This server was connected to the Chewton Glen UPS system for added resiliency and to protect the server from a hotel power failure.

#### Requirement

A wireless internet solution that was integrated with the existing Soft-brands Aremis front of house configuration. This would enable users to log-on to the SPARK HotSpot using their surname and room number for authentication, paying for any use at the end of their stay via their hotel bill. The look and feel of the system was vitally important in addition to their technical requirements. Chewton Glen is a highly respected name. Their brand is associated with quality, luxury and extremely good levels of customer service. It was vital that we portrayed this message on the SPARK Hot Spots portal page maximising the hotel's current marketing message.

#### Solution

A carefully designed project management system was required in order to achieve the extensive specifications of the hotel. A close look at the network integration, hardware and access point installation enabled us to prepare the necessary customised software modules, screens and facilities required. Using carefully thought through management systems and a team of highly skilled technical experts we were able to work closely with the Chewton Glen throughout the whole planning and implementation processes. Constant positive communication with

the Chewton Glen management team enabled us to provide them with exactly the right solution. Our efficient levels of customer service were constantly in motion ensuring the SPARK Hot Spots worked extremely well within the given environment.

#### Challenges

Chewton Glen afforded a number of special challenges, the biggest of which was identified by the wireless propagation radio survey. The positioning of access points is critical in the deployment of a WiFi network and due to the nature of the building construction and layout there was a requirement for 21 access points in total. In some areas of the Hotel the walls were so thick (construction being Concrete, brick and steel) that access points had to be placed in much higher density than normally expected. The environment and areas of installation of the access points was also hampered by the difficulty in getting network cables to some of the access points. Special considerations were made to overcome this issue as described later in this document. One of the challenges that was unforeseen was the distance from the local exchange to the Hotel. The consequence of this was that the only available ADSL service was limited to 512Kb/s. At least double this capacity would be required if the Hotel was to offer an acceptable level of internet access service.



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##### Software

The core of the deployment was the SPARK software itself. Integration testing and a trial had previously been provided for the Chewton Glen and after receiving sign-off from the IT Director James Hobden, the system was built onto the production SPARK server. The SPARK Software provided the mechanism for controlling access to the hotels internet gateways.

SPARK was designed from the ground up as an industrial grade access point and Hot Spot

management system. Initially architected and in use in very large scale managed system deployments, SPARK is also deployed in enterprises to perform management and control of communities of access points and users. Due to its flexibility, SPARK was the ideal choice for the Chewton Glen.

Key to the success and take up of the system was the ease of use and the overall Guest Experience. The SPARK system was customised and enhanced in such a way to meet the exact requirements of the IT Director James Hobden.

##### Solution Features

- Full WiFi compliance
- Branded User Experience
- Content filtering
- User and device analytics
- Optional marketing opportunities
- Local businesses benefit
- Attract more visitors to the Town
- Integrating into the 21st century
- Social inclusion
- Access the world from your hands

#### Implementation

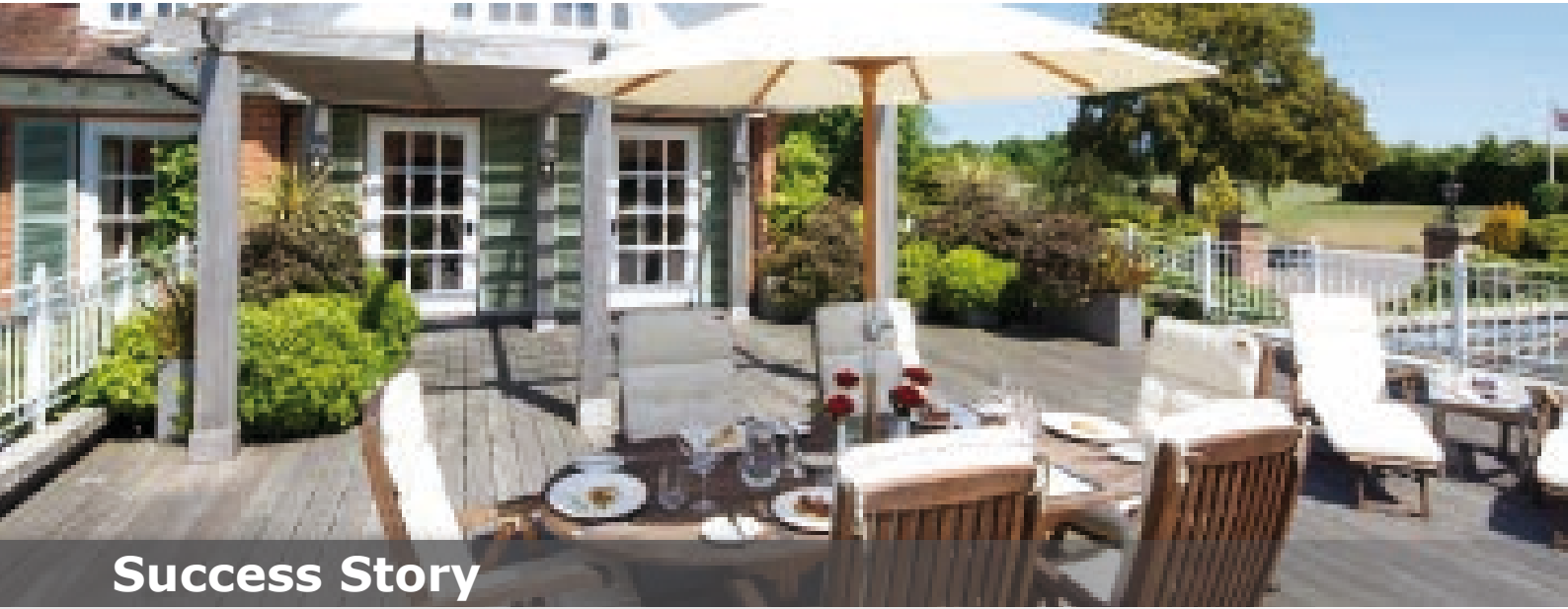
The initial phase of the implementation was a full radio survey. Once that was complete the project manager informed Chewton Glen staff where the access points were to be located. The access points were purchased and all firmware revisions were checked and upgraded to the latest stable release where appropriate. This was a considerable task with 21 access points to be deployed. The access points were then configured to talk to their peer access points in the case of those that were configured for wireless distribution and they were then tested fully on the local area network to which they were connected. Once the access point implementation was complete the SPARK server was brought on line. SPARK was configured with all of the access point data and interoperability testing was started. All access points were able to 'talk' to SPARK with the exception of one which was identified as a cable termination fault. Quickly rectified the system was fully operational.

#### Front of House

The next phase was to test the integration with the Aremis Front of House System. A number of 'Ghost Rooms' were configured in the property management system and testing was carried out. The integration worked perfectly (all credit to Softbrands and WiFiSPARK development teams) and room charging was completed.

#### User Experience

Following testing, the customised Chewton Glen Login Pages were added. The login page can be fully customised to suit the hotel and include free links to the hotel's website and banner management promoting special offers and events.



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### 2011 Update

Chewton Glen is now offering the service for free to all their guests using our login system. This still retains all the usual benefits of SPARK including bandwidth control, usage reports and a customised login page.

### Functionality

Once the guest clicks on 'Login' they will be asked how many days access they require and will enter the duration in a dialogue box. The system will then confirm the charge and when the guest clicks on 'OK' they will be connected to the internet. During this login process the SPARK system interrogates AREMIS to determine if there is a guest with the entered surname staying in the room in question. If there is, then the application will be processed. If there is not, then an error message will be displayed to the guest prompting them to login again. If the login is a success then SPARK will post a charge to the AREMIS system according to how many days internet was requested. The charge that is posted to AREMIS from SPARK is entirely configurable at any time.

### Final Phases

The final part of the infrastructure was the internet access. Due to the distance restrictions it was necessary to have a leased line. The best option for Chewton Glen's requirements was a 2mb leased line. A high grade router was installed to ensure a reliable service was provided. WiFi SPARK implemented a load balancing arrangement across the access points ensuring the most efficient use of available bandwidth.

### Results

Meeting project requirements despite some interesting technical and physical challenges, The Chewton Glen WiFi enablement project using SPARK was delivered on time and on budget. The system delivered fully met the customer's requirements. "We have been impressed by the system and the support offered by the team behind it", commented James Hobden. "WiFiSPARK have implemented change requests very quickly, and the system is now gaining wide acceptance with the guests". Even before complete deployment, SPARK was successfully used in a conference situation by a major client who was hosting an IT event at the Hotel. With the level of commitment shown and the results achieved, The Chewton Glen has agreed to act as a reference site for the SPARK system. A number of other leading hotels have visited Chewton Glen to see the SPARK system being used. All the visitors have responded favourably to the on-site demonstration of SPARK.