

ZyXEL

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Lewis Silkin LLP

ZyXEL delivers Lewis Silkin a flexible working solution



“The previous installed solution took up IT and Facilities resource to allow our clients to access the internet. We needed a system that was easier to use but also offered the reliability and security we needed. The ZyXEL solution allowed us to open the network connection and manage security far more effectively.”

Jan Durant, director of IT at Lewis Silkin

Overview

Challenges:

- Offer visiting clients the opportunity to hot desk from its offices and access the Internet while working on its premises
- Deliver a secure, easy-to-use and implement wireless solution that required minimal management

Benefits:

- Lewis Silkin can offer its clients the opportunity to hot desk from its offices easily and conveniently, with free Internet access
- Minimal IT configuration is required – and the solution can be managed by the receptionists, rather than the IT or Facilities teams
- The IT and Facilities teams can dedicate their resources to more strategic tasks
- Lewis Silkin can ensure the security of its network with time locked access
- The ZyXEL solution delivers coverage throughout Lewis Silkin’s offices
- Employees can also easily access the wireless solution when working away from their desk

Solution:

- 15 ZyXEL G4100 v2 access points
- Two thermal printers (one to provide back-up support if necessary)
- ZyXEL ES2024 PWR Fast Ethernet switch

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Lewis Silkin is a full service commercial law firm with three areas of special focus: people, media and property. The law firm has about 230 employees, the majority of which are based in central London with the rest in its Oxford office. Its clients range from large organisations to start-ups and come from a wide range of sectors: social housing and property, to advertising and media; government agencies and utilities to corporate financiers, restaurants and retailers.

Commercial law is a highly competitive area of legal practice, so firms are constantly striving to distinguish their services from those offered by other firms. Lewis Silkin is a dynamic, forward-thinking practice

Gaining a competitive edge

The first wireless solution the law firm installed was based on Linksys technology and gave clients access to the Internet via a separate ADSL line. Lewis Silkin ensured a secure connection by assigning individual security keys to clients on arrival at its offices.

While the principle behind the wireless solution was sound, the technology behind it was unsuitable for Lewis Silkin's needs. For a start, it was a significant drain on the IT and Facilities resource's time, as every time a client visited, it was their responsibility to set the connection up on the

Finding a suitable wireless solution

Datashare investigated the range of solutions available comprising of products from Cisco, before deciding that ZyXEL's wireless hotspot solution – including firewall, access authentication and account management features – offered the right fit for Lewis Silkin. "The amount of IT and Facilities resource the previous solution required was a big issue for us," recalls Jan Durant, director of IT at Lewis Silkin. "But the ZyXEL solution allowed us to open the network connection and manage security far more effectively. We were able to retain our corporate network running independently from the hot desking environment for our clients."

Datashare's proposed wireless solution was based on 15 ZyXEL G4100 v2 access points, two thermal printers (one to provide back-up support if necessary) and a ZyXEL ES2024 PWR Fast Ethernet switch. The ES2024 switch was chosen as it offers Power over Ethernet support. This was important, explains Durant, "As we were deploying the access points in our meeting rooms, so we wanted to keep the number of cables on display to an absolute minimum."

that describes itself as 'a rather more human law firm'. Its focus is on delivering value to clients, by providing the best possible service on their legal issues here and now.

One of the ways in which Lewis Silkin is developing closer client relations is by surpassing clients' expectations of customer service. To deliver this it offers clients visiting its offices the option to 'hot desk' and work flexibly on its premises with full Internet access. Employees can also take advantage of the system, for example, to check a reference point online while researching a case in the library or for even the flexibility to book their holiday during their coffee break.

client's laptop, ensure it was secure and then remove the connection when the client was ready to depart. There were also issues with the wireless coverage and signal strength in certain areas of its offices.

In September 2007, Lewis Silkin asked one of its IT consultancies, Datashare Solutions, to provide a wireless solution that overcame the shortcomings with its existing set-up. Its brief was to deliver a platform that could be accessed throughout its three-floor London office: in meeting rooms, the library and various ad hoc break-out areas.

The ZyXEL solution was chosen as it gives Lewis Silkin the flexibility to determine how it provides Internet access to clients and supports up to 100 concurrent users. It also offered better value for money, and worked more effectively than the previous Linksys solution.

As the wireless hotspot gateway is integrated with IP Plug 'n' Play (PnP) technology, there's no configuration required by clients to start surfing the Web from Lewis Silkin's offices, making it incredibly easy to use. Clients can also be rest assured that their web session is secure, as ZyXEL's G-4100 v2 access points come integrated with Virtual LAN (VLAN) security and IP address filtering technology.

Before deploying the solution, Datashare ran a proof of concept at its offices to demonstrate the ZyXEL solution in action. It also tested the signal strength to ensure that there was sufficient coverage of access points for when clients logged on to the system. Satisfied with the results, Datashare rolled out the solution to Lewis Silkin's offices less than a month later, as the solution was simple to deploy this minimised the disruption to the organisation and its users.

Delivering an effective flexible working solution

The ZyXEL wireless solution can support up to 100 concurrent users at any one time – the number will vary depending on how many people are using the wireless network across its meeting rooms, library and break-out areas. Now, when clients arrive at Lewis Silkin's offices, the receptionist that greets them asks if they want Internet access during their visit. If they do, the receptionist prints out a ticket with one-button press from the ZyXEL thermal printer, which contains the client's unique account, password and pre-configured time information that they need to enjoy free Internet access for the duration of their visit. Once they go to their Internet browser, and select the wireless network all they need to do is type in the required information to be ready to get on-line.

"It allows us to control access to the wireless network, without requiring any intervention from our IT team to ensure the security and configuration of the network manually," explains Durant. "There's minimal maintenance cost and effort required to deliver the hotspot service." Before, the entire process could take up to 30 minutes; now it's almost instantaneous, providing a considerable time saving for Lewis Silkin's IT team, given the number of clients visiting Lewis Silkin every day.

Security of the network is now more robust as Internet access is time-locked. Previously if an IT manager was unavailable to disable the network connection, it would remain open. This may have made the network vulnerable to attack. It also provides a form of disaster recovery for Lewis Silkin's employees so should any problems occur with Lewis Silkin's core network used by its employees – which is separate to the wireless network – its lawyers would be able to use the wireless network to access files and documents on their corporate network remotely over the Web. So it provides a form of disaster recovery solution as well for Lewis Silkin's laptop users.

These benefits haven't been at the expense of network coverage or signal strength, as Internet access is readily available across its three storeys and is far stronger than before. Most importantly, the new ZyXEL wireless hotspot solution gives Lewis Silkin the opportunity to offer its clients value-added services. In the competitive world of commercial law, this opportunity to deliver a higher standard of customer service is a significant benefit for Lewis Silkin in distinguishing its portfolio from its competitors.

About ZyXEL Communications

ZyXEL Communications Corp. (TSE: 2391), headquartered in Hsinchu, Taiwan, is the world's leading residential gateway provider and was recently ranked as Taiwan's First "Green Enterprise," and the second best "Green" Company in Asia (2007 CG watch, Asian Corporate Governance Association). ZyXEL's comprehensive Internet Protocol-based (IP) networking solutions include access multiplexers, customer premise equipment, Internet security and Wireless LAN equipment, enabling high-performance network services for SOHO, small to mid-sized businesses and service providers. ZyXEL works closely with worldwide network equipment vendors, telecommunications companies, ISPs, and other major businesses. For more information, visit the company's website at <http://www.zyxel.com>