

Wansbeck District Council improves community collaboration and citizen safety with Alcatel-Lucent converged IP network

Region-wide wireless network created to enable greater collaboration between e-communities



Wansbeck District Council in the North East of England has deployed an Alcatel IP network to increase community safety through improved CCTV surveillance, as well as raise the standard of internal staff collaboration and improve public service.

The installation, which was completed by Alcatel-Lucent business partner Rapier Systems, gives Wansbeck a converged network for voice, video and data, and Wansbeck's 500 employees benefit from free Voice over IP (VoIP) based internal calling. The Northumberland-based council has also created a licensed wireless network called COMSEN (Community Network South East Northumberland), covering more than thirty public sector buildings and supporting several thousand users, to enable more efficient communication between neighbouring local authorities.

The converged IP network, which runs through the majority of the population centres in South East Northumberland and also links DataBanks in Newcastle, is powered by Alcatel-Lucent OmniSwitch network infrastructure technology, integrated with OmniPCX Enterprise IP-PBX

integrated with Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX Enterprise IP-PBX phone system and complemented by the OmniTouch contact centre solutions, to support Wansbeck customer service agents. In addition, neighbouring authorities now have access to a wireless data network via Alcatel-Lucent's secure OmniSwitch 6600, 6800 and 7700 data switches.

The result is the Wansbeck network has greater resilience since there is no longer a single point of failure, meaning traffic can be easily re-routed in the event of any network problems.

Previously, Wansbeck had been maintaining three costly and inflexible networks for voice, video and data communications. The new network allows Wansbeck to effectively route region-wide CCTV feeds on the same network as voice and data traffic.

The result has made community security surveillance video easy to access and significantly reducing network operating costs. The network also enables staff to gain swift access to council resources and other employees, while the contact centre solution has helped improve not only collaboration among agents and council staff, but also community customer service. Eight walk-in centres supporting residents of the Northumberland area are linked into the Wansbeck network and enable rapid response and resolution of service requests.

"We were impressed by the overall performance of the Alcatel-Lucent offering, particularly the integration between its voice and data products," said John Kelly, chief IT officer, Wansbeck District Council. "The new solution allows staff all over the district to communicate more effectively with one another, improving both their own productivity and Wansbeck's overall ability to deliver a high standard of service to the community."

The licensed wireless network was created in recognition of the fact that neighbouring councils were suffering similar problems in terms of high operating costs and internal communication difficulties. The new network currently covers the South East Northumberland region, and is designed to assist local authorities in the provision of joined-up public services. The council also has future plans to integrate neighbouring authorities' phone systems onto the same network, so that citizen calls can be routed and transferred to the correct service provider with greater speed and efficiency.

About Alcatel-Lucent

Alcatel-Lucent (Euronext Paris and NYSE: ALU) provides solutions that enable service providers, enterprises and governments worldwide, to deliver voice, data and video communication services to end-users. As a leader in fixed, mobile and converged broadband networking, IP technologies, applications, and services, Alcatel-Lucent offers the end-to-end solutions that enable compelling communications services for people at home, at work and on the move. With 79,000 employees and operations in more than 130 countries, Alcatel-Lucent is a local partner with global reach. The company has the most experienced global services team in the industry, and one of the largest research, technology and innovation organisations in the telecommunications industry. Alcatel-Lucent achieved proforma combined revenues of Euro 18.6 billion in 2005, and is incorporated in France, with executive offices located in Paris. For more information, visit Alcatel-Lucent on the Internet: <http://www.alcatel-lucent.com>

"The wireless network has given each of the councils involved the ability to be more flexible in the way they communicate, in order to provide the best method to connect users." continued Kelly. "This flexibility also enables easy integration of additional sites and councils, while going forward we hope to provide free internet access from all public buildings."

Wansbeck also has future plans to increase the level of usage of the network by other public sector partners, and it hopes to be able to set up a virtual call centre using home/remote agents in addition to office-based employees, to further improve customer service.

"Wansbeck is continually looking at innovative ways to improve its interaction with the community as a whole, and the new network will give it a great platform on which to deploy further services or applications, as and when they're required," said David Oliver, Senior Communications Engineer at Rapier Systems.

"More and more organisations are realising that convergence isn't just about saving money - it's about overhauling and improving internal processes through greater collaboration and increased access to resources," said Graeme Allan, VP Enterprise Sales, UK and Ireland, Alcatel-Lucent. "Wansbeck is a good example of a forward-thinking council committed to providing the highest standard of service to its citizens, and the installation serves as an excellent blueprint that other public sector organisations should seek to follow."