

Welcome to our Security Special Edition

Data security never seems to be far from the top of the IT agenda, so in this issue we take the opportunity to look at a few key areas around remote working, disaster recovery and information governance.

Depending on your perspective, security issues now extend to nearly every area of corporate IT infrastructure, so it's important to ensure appropriate measures get implemented, from the highly secure environment of the data centre, right out to unmanaged access points and those dreaded USB memory sticks. Public sector institutions in particular have to meet some of the strictest security measures; with only a handful CSG approved products and services there to fulfil them, cost is still the big stumbling block for many ambitious projects to enable flexibility or remote working.

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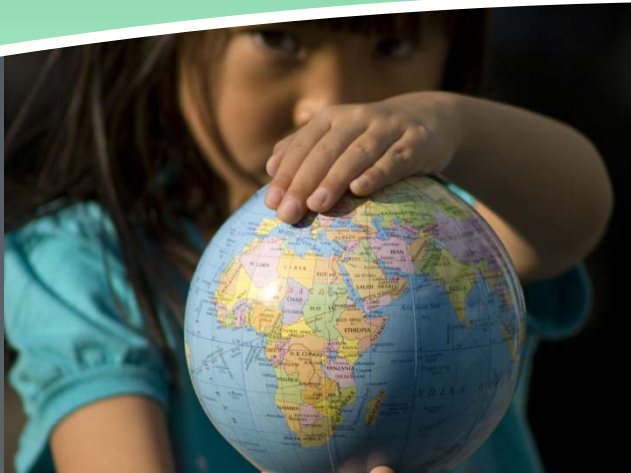
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SECURITY SPECIAL EDITION

this issue

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UKN rebrands as a Global services provider

A new global IT delivery strategy has been unveiled by UKN Group, coinciding with its expansion to a new headquarters in Chineham Park near Basingstoke. **In this article Chief Executive, Michael Eaton, walks through some of the changes and reiterates the company's commitment to client led products and services.**

Historically, UKN has primarily provided technology and outsourced services to a base of clients across Western Europe. With the increased scope of the company's portfolio and its continuing rise to prominence as a leading authority in the areas of virtualised application and desktop delivery, the global branding initiative is a mark of the commitment to its improving international coverage. Moving forward the company will now incorporate the "Global IT Services" terminology as part of its day-to-day marketing and identity.

During Summer 2009 (Qtr 2) the company reviewed its strategic focus and business model for the next three years, aiming for higher levels of sustainable growth, based on widespread predictions for a gradual return to normality in the global marketplace. UKN will continue to invest considerable R&D in creating "Best in Class" technical solutions that are designed to deliver maximum cost saving and efficiency, based on a holistic view of what is currently available. This approach has

been central to the development of an adaptable, low-cost desktop strategy that is delivered in tandem with existing investments, even in complex enterprise environments with multi-tier architectures,

The UKN portfolio will be divided into 2 distinct areas, Services and Solutions.

A **Solutions** division will be used to communicate a wide range of business-issue related solutions including Desktop as a Service, Remote Working, Workplace Collaboration and Follow-me printing to name a few examples.

The **Services** side of the business will encompass the full range of IT outsourcing, desktop support and technical consultancy, including our increasingly popular pre-deployment technical workshops and solution compatibility testing.

This focus and transformation has enabled positive change throughout the business in all departments, enabling client organisations to establish desktop and IT infrastructures that boost efficiency, reduce costs and increase flexibility in the workplace. Additionally the company is, for the first time embarking on a number of key strategic alliances with globally recognised systems integrators, to help them deliver several of UKN's unique virtualisation and optimisation propositions.

Choosing your Remote Access Strategy

With the mobile workforce growing rapidly, remote access will play an increasingly critical role in modern IT strategy. IDC predicts that by 2011, at least 50% of the European workforce will either be working from home or on the move. But just how important is it for businesses to follow the trend?

Increased demand for flexible working is placing more pressure on CIOs to consider the potential trade offs with data security and cost.

There are quite literally hundreds of remote access and home worker solutions out there that all come with varying functionality and levels of security. With requirements ranging from simple web mail through to complete desktop access, there is no single solution which can satisfy every business need. In many cases solutions have to be multi tiered – with different technologies delivering different levels of functionality and cost, proportional to the strength of the security.

Public sector organisations have for some time required CESA approval for their remote access technology, greatly limiting the potential choices and in some cases driving costs to prohibitive levels. Fortunately, SSL VPN technology is starting to gain the necessary seals of approval, a development which should begin to limit the high cost of setting up public sector workers with secure connectivity at home. It's not unusual for councils and central government to provide all manner of complicated security and privacy technology to people who want to work outside the office. Equally, laptops have become a perpetual source of frustration for IT (and not just in the public sector) as a source of risk that is also a significant drain on money and resource.

These kinds of issues can only begin to be resolved with a detailed understanding of the workforce's composition. The balance between different groups of users always be changing, so it's best to make sure technical solutions are purchased on the basis of a thorough understanding of operational requirements.



Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere. Immortal words of the 70's that send our minds racing with nostalgic thoughts of a bikini clad beauty, lounging poolside, sipping a cool Martini. Back then, how many of us stopped for a moment to wrestle with concerns about the shameless use of innuendo or wonder about the difference between "anyplace" and "anywhere", probably not too many.

Even if the language itself causes a few raised eyebrows, in the current climate of uncertainty, the premise it conveys should strike a major chord with anyone in IT responsible for disaster recovery.

As infrastructure and technology choices continue to head in the direction of the data centre, the possibility of employing an "Anywhere, Anytime" mentality to managing emergency situations, has become more of a reality. The swine flu pandemic is acting as a timely reminder of the importance of planning for scenarios that can affect people, as well as places of work. Having alternative working facilities and resilient failover systems will not necessarily be enough to keep a company ticking over if large numbers of people are forced to stay at home through illness.

It shouldn't come as too great a surprise then, that in a recent Forrester survey, remote access topped the list of strategies used by

DR and BC decision makers, with 86% of them including it as part of their disaster recovery plans.

Let's say a major facility is unavailable for work due to an emergency situation, or the workforce is made to stay indoors to avoid the spread of a pandemic flu virus. The options are limited almost exclusively to remote access in one form or another. This could be as simple as a VPN or remote desktop (Terminal Services) solution, but these technologies are giving way to richer desktop environments that can provide the same full range of functionality and security as internal corporate systems.

UKN Group Chief Commercial Officer, Paul Foster has been keeping a close eye on the trend towards home working and believes that remote access to standard desktop session and applications, regardless of location (work, home, roaming or WiFi hotspot) has become a must have to cope with the challenges of a disaster.

He comments, "it is widely anticipated that a second wave of swine flu will strike at some point during this winter. The impact will be difficult to predict, however in light of recent events with large numbers of staff possibly being instructed to remain at home for days, if not weeks, the effects on productivity could well be profound. Enabling these staff to communicate and transact with the majority of their standard functions via a secure internet portal is likely to be as valuable to business as any medical vaccine."

Commercial Viewpoints on Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity

Paul Foster takes a look at how virtualisation technology is levelling the playing field for businesses concerned about DR

During the last couple of years, virtualised infrastructure has emerged as a cheap and effective path to improved emergency preparation. Virtualisation acts as an all-important buffer against physical hardware dependencies during an emergency, so in situations where an office or data centre experiences a major outage, the organisation can be brought back to an acceptable state of operation within minutes or hours.

In the past it was only major corporations that could afford this kind of rapid and repeatable approach to disaster recovery. Now, with the advent of affordable virtualisation, businesses of all sizes are in a better position to quickly bounce critical systems back online and provide secure, flexible arrangements for staff, when working from the office is not an option.

The real key to an effective DR plan is all about having a solid, documented strategy and a robust system design to reinforce it. One unfortunate trap too many fall into, is failing to make sure plans are updated on a regular basis, because even the best DR strategy in the world is rendered useless if it is not relevant to the business on the day it invoked. UKN Group has spent a significant amount of time over the last twelve months consulting on flexible, virtualised environments for a range of organisations, helping them to establish a reliable base for stable and consistent operations. If you are concerned about how well your business could recover in these situations, talk to UKN about how virtualisation could make a difference.

UKNow UKN renews Gold Partnership

For the fourth consecutive year UKN has renewed as a Microsoft Gold Partner in its three core competencies: Networking Infrastructure Solutions, Advanced Infrastructure and Information Worker Solutions. Plans are also underway to complete Microsoft's newly released virtualisation competency later this financial year, tying in with UKN's strategy to continue innovating for clients at the forefront of application and desktop delivery.

INNOVATION Citrix prepares to 'Dazzle' users.



They're calling it the iTunes of the Citrix world, packaging a slick user interface that behaves like the familiar music store, but instead of downloading your favorite songs, you choose business applications.

Dazzle arrives hot on the heels of Citrix's other new software release, 'Receiver', a rebranded version of their virtualised desktop and application client. From a technical perspective much of the exciting stuff is directly handled by Receiver, but for end users, Dazzle provides a simple, self-service interface for managing and installing software as it is required

Currently the new product line is only designed to deliver and manage XenApp published applications, but work is already well underway to incorporate Microsoft's App-V technology into the single client.

Security, Information Governance & Policy

October 2009 has seen one of the most embarrassing data losses many of us will remember for quite a while, with Microsoft desperately struggling to recover cloud-based personal data for up to 800,000 of its Sidekick Smartphone users.

It's been a difficult month for Microsoft's cloud computing plans. No sooner do they launch a comprehensive vision for hosting clients' applications and infrastructure than they find themselves being dragged through the mud because of a freakishly disruptive server outage. The actual incident has been blamed on a malfunction serious enough to bring down both the main Sidekick user database and its backup, causing loss of personal data that included emails, photos and address books. This kind of outage is an extremely rare event, especially for an organisation with the credentials and budget to create the most resilient data centres on the

planet. But that is just the point, in an isolated incident, where some part of a process appears to have broken down, a normally manageable, albeit serious, situation has disrupted users and opened the door to a swathe of criticism. Predictably, the tech media have seized the opportunity to go straight for the jugular, denouncing Microsoft, cloud computing and their hosting plans in a single breath. Commercially it highlights the importance of robust security and information governance policies, with data far more freely available and mobile than ever – organisations need to be prepared to invest and plan accordingly, or face the consequences.

At a time when the economy is struggling and many business models have come under intense pressure, data compromise is now an unforgivable crime. The theft of intellectual property to gain commercial advantage is extremely common, either by hackers or more often because internal security procedures have allowed staff to walk out of their

place of work with sensitive information, completely unchecked.

It's not only about technology. Good information governance means starting at the highest level with policy, working practice and enforcement that will underpin the efforts of CIOs when it comes to implementing the security requirements of the business.

The loss of two discs containing the names and personal details of nearly half the UK population sparked a media storm that highlighted many of the procedural failings inherent in the public sector. It was a wake up call that has caused businesses and government departments alike to implement much stricter guidelines on the use and access to data. In a recent case UKN has been helping parts of the NHS formalise and document information governance and security guidelines, with the next step being to help them understand ways to successfully implement and enforce it.

TECH SPOT - Becrypt Trusted Client

One of the biggest dilemmas facing IT departments is how to provide cost-effective, secure access from unmanaged devices that are inherently insecure. Becrypt Trusted Client is a superb innovation, undergoing CESG approval, that does away with some of the expensive hardware costs.

It's one of those ideas which seems so obvious once you know about it, you wonder why you never came up with it in the first place. Unfortunately for us would be inventors, the boffins at encryption and security specialists Becrypt got there first. With Trusted Client, users can boot from any device, no matter how insecure, into a completely safe, independent operating environment that bypasses local storage, eliminating the possibility of data leakage or malware infection. To get started the user simply inserts an encrypted

USB stick, containing their trusted environment and then reboots the machine they want to work from. The trusted client launches directly from the memory stick and provides user interface, web browser, email access and standalone applications that have been set up for them by IT.

Trusted Client ticks a whole range of security and cost boxes for the IT department. It can be issued as an alternative to laptops, deployed as a low cost business continuity solution and reduces corporate asset risk by adding control to previously unmanageable devices. It really is the ultimate in portable, remote access and effectively turns the end-point into a secure thin-client. The technology can be integrated with SSL VPN to provide locked down access to a desktop presented by Terminal Services, Citrix, Virtual Desktop or even a user's existing office PC.

• UKN wins tender to supply Sun Ray Thin Clients to Malvern Hills council

Malvern Hills District council, working on behalf of a consortium of local government organisations, has selected UKN as their preferred supplier for an Ultra Thin client desktop infrastructure. UKN were awarded the contract on the strength of their expertise and competitive pricing. The consortium also included Worcester City Council and Wychavon District Council.

• UKN supports the Butler Group at three key strategy briefings in September

As part of their efforts to help companies understand and make informed choices about virtualisation technologies, UKN, joined by their client Symphony Group, presented a number of key infrastructure solutions to analysts and delegates at the briefing sessions organised and hosted by the Butler Group.

• UKN launches its NHS IT Information Governance policy framework

To help with the growing complexity of public sector IT governance and policy guidelines, UKN has launched a brand new service aimed at delivering a complete, bespoke document set to NHS organisations that may be finding it a challenge to keep their full requirements up-to-date and together in one place.

• Desktop as a Service Pilot launched with major Shared Services Organisation

As part of ongoing trials into suitability and usage scenarios for UKN's Desktop as a Service and VDi solutions, the organisation is about to implement a test system that could benefit over 15,000 health sector workers. Typically this kind of system has been shown to help lower desktop TCO by up to 50%.

More at www.ukngroup.com

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