

Case Study: North Wales Police

The Challenge

North Wales Police is a pioneering Force, which recognised the benefits new technologies could bring to the Police Force. This was not just about filling in forms online, but being able to centralise and distribute information easily and quickly, to all members of an investigation team, in the Station and on the beat.



As one of the most progressive Forces in the UK, North Wales Police were keen to have access to the nationwide police network (PNN2), which it believed would significantly help the fight against crime in North Wales.

PNN2 would give the Force access to classified information, which is obviously highly sensitive, and North Wales Police was faced with the problem of how to allow access, 24 hours a day across numerous sites, whilst still maintaining security and confidentiality.

The challenge for CNS was to gauge the security requirements needed to allow the Force access to the network, to physically install the infrastructure and to create security policies for a variety of internal departments. Of course, all of this had to be achieved whilst ensuring that the system remained operationally viable to North Wales Police.

The Project

CNS specialises in assessing security risks and balancing these risks against the effects on the usability of the network and the ease of accessing critical data, as well as the cost of implementation. For the North Wales Police project considerations included:

Internal Security

The prime consideration was internal security as this is often the area where organisations are most vulnerable. Through the use of strong authentication, perimeter defences, secure configuration & encryption, CNS was able to provide a tailored security solution that restricted Internet access to banned materials for most users, whilst ensuring that illegal activity could still be tracked by the relevant officers. CNS had to consider the IT needs of a range of employees from policemen to accounts teams & admin staff, as well as taking account of working hours specific to the police.

Based on CRAMM methodology, CNS was able to develop security policies that met the needs of a busy and varied organisation, outlining the procedures for authorised access, action following a security breach, process for accessing the network remotely, Internet usage and incident handling.

External Security

CNS, through its Penetration Testing Team, is able to consider the threat posed by hackers and check where a system might be vulnerable. For North Wales Police, this was all part of the balance of security against access. With such sensitive information, external use had to be limited. However, the nature of policing will mean that the system is often being accessed remotely and Convergent was able to establish proper checks in order that the information remains secure.

Public Perception

North Wales Police, like any public sector organisation, has to consider carefully how it spends taxpayer's money and CNS were able to bring the project in on time and to budget.

The Results

Using its consultative approach, CNS was able to implement a secure system, which met with government approval (NPIA), as well as drafting security policies for internal use.

CNS's work resulted in North Wales Police meeting the criteria, which allows access to the nationwide secure police network PNN2.

Keith Williams, IT Development Manager at North Wales Police, commented, "Security is a very specialised discipline and we needed be sure that the company we chose understood our requirements and was able to suggest relevant security options. That CNS could focus on our organisational needs and apply suitable solutions was key to the success of the project." He continued, "we see the effective implementation of new technologies as critical to policing in the 21st century. Our next step with Convergent is to look at how we can further integrate wireless technologies into modern policing methods."

Kevin Dowd, Director of Security Assessment at CNS added "North Wales Police had particular requirements and our aim was to focus on the organisational needs and find the technology to fit. North Wales Police now has a security infrastructure that is scalable with solid internal security processes in place. These systems are flexible enough to meet the challenge of a modern police force, but are easy to manage and administer."

About Convergent Network Solutions

CNS is a specialist security and networking consultancy, established in the City of London in 1999. The company is wholly owned by its employees and directors. CNS has built an excellent reputation for information security & networking consultancy & services to our customers across a variety of sectors on a global scale. CNS's customers vary in size from FTSE 100 and large public sector organisations to SMEs, but are united



in the importance of digital information to their business, and in their desire for pragmatic, knowledgeable help in securing their systems and data, and in meeting their connectivity requirements.

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