

case study



Eurodata enables Trinity Laban to deliver an enhanced educational experience, increase staff productivity, and save thousands on hardware costs, with IAG remote access technology.

Background

Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance is one of the UK's foremost institutions dedicated to music and contemporary dance education. The organisation comprises two centres of learning, Trinity College of Music in Greenwich and Laban in Deptford. With a growing international reputation, a growing student and staff population - both of which required greater access to corporate and educational systems - the organisation's IT resources were being placed under great pressure. On recommendation from Microsoft, the institute turned to Eurodata for help finding a cost-effective solution to the problem.

The Challenge

Yvonne Connell, Head of IT at Trinity Laban outlined her key challenges, "We knew that the merger of Trinity College of Music and Laban would enhance our reputation for excellence in music and contemporary dance training both in the UK and internationally. However, with a growing number of students and staff to support, we had to find a cost-effective way to stretch our IT budget that would give both groups of users easy access to all the electronic resources they required at a time of day that suited them."

The college only possessed a limited number of student PCs at each site, and a limited physical estate to accommodate any more. Expanding the

PC estate to meet the demands of an increasingly IT-intense learning environment would be too costly. Connell's team had to find a way to provide flexible, anytime access to educational resources for all students, without breaking the budget.

In addition, Connell had identified a need to reduce the complexity of access to user-facing IT systems. She explained, "The browser-based tools our students needed most frequently, such as web mail and the intranet, all had separate access methods, so that students had to remember multiple URLs and access routines. This level of complexity meant students were struggling to locate the information they needed, such as course and assessment materials. It also meant my team were spending too much valuable time answering student support calls, rather than undertaking business-orientated projects."

For staff at both sites access to their files, folders and enterprise applications was via an enterprise-wide WAN, but there was no reliable or secure means for them to access these resources when they were off-site. Clearly, this posed a productivity challenge that had to be overcome if students were to enjoy the best possible quality of education.

Lastly, while the IT team had implemented a VPN solution across both sites, Connell found it inadequate in terms of reliability and robustness. Her team needed a secure solution that

would enable them to remotely monitor and administrate the servers at all Trinity Laban sites.

The Solution

"I had been researching technologies that could provide the solution to all the challenges we faced and felt that internet access gateway (IAG) technology was ideal because it would enable all our users to access all the resources they needed remotely, through one portal", stated Connell. "And it would also mean we could begin delivering IT services to students rather than IT hardware, which would help me contain future costs."

Having approached Microsoft to explore the possibilities of IAG, Connell was advised to contact their Gold level partner, Eurodata, for help. "Microsoft gave Eurodata a glowing recommendation, telling us Eurodata been responsible for bringing IAG technology to Europe via Whale Communications' remote access solution," said Connell. "This fact, coupled with their extensive experience in working with a variety of educational establishments validated our decision to select Eurodata as our partner on this project."

Working closely with Connell's team, Eurodata's dedicated technical consultants designed a solution based on Celestix Networks' WSA4000 appliance and Swivel Secure's PINsafe tokenless, two-stage authentication



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technology for maximum security. Celestix is a Microsoft Windows-based, ready-to-deploy IAG 2007 appliance, which provides secure socket layer (SSL) virtual private networking (VPN), a Web application firewall, and endpoint security management. This enables complete access control, user authorization, and content inspection across specified business applications to keep Trinity Laban's corporate resources protected from inappropriate use at all times.

Swivel Secure's patented IAG network security solution is a token-less multi-factor authentication system that sends users a unique PIN which can be changed to something they will easily remember, once they have completed their initial log-on. To access the portal, users log in with their Active Directory profile details plus a coded version of their unique PIN.

When combined, these technologies provide mobile and remote workers with straightforward, yet secure access from a range of devices and locations including PCs, mobile devices and internet service points, such as cafés. IAG technology also enables IT administrators to enforce compliance with application and information usage guidelines through a customised remote access policy based on device, user, application or other business criteria.

"Once the solution had been designed, it was vital that we verified it via a pilot", stated Connell. "This occurred two months before the live date and, due to some of the most adverse weather conditions we'd experienced for decades, the pilot received a

rigorous trial from 20 staff out of 150 who were forced to work from home during that period."

"It was extremely helpful to be able to access my files from home during this unprecedented snow fall as I had an important deadline to meet that day," remarked Charlotte Cooper, Head of Planning.

With the pilot deemed a huge success, and those involved citing ease and speed of use as one of the keys to its success, the solution was rolled out in full with implementation completed in days.

"We found the IAG experience that Eurodata brought to the project absolutely invaluable. Their flexible approach and willingness to impart their expertise was refreshing and enlightening. They are the kind of service provider that every organisation seeks as a true business partner."

Yvonne Connell, Head of IT, Trinity Laban

The Benefits

In only a matter of weeks staff have reported significant productivity gains. "The uptake among staff has been tremendous with 20% now using the system regularly", commented Connell. "With over 600 students at Trinity, 400 at Laban and a staff that frequently moves between sites, or needs to work away from our locations, it was important that we found a solution that enabled staff and students to communicate and share information from wherever they were, whenever they needed. Now staff can work much more effectively and productively without having to wait until they get on

site. This delivers an enhanced educational experience for our students and superior working practices for our staff."

The solution has also delivered important cost-savings: Enabling remote access means that students can access the IT services they need using their own computers. This will allow the institute to save tens of thousands of pounds they would otherwise have had to spend on increasing the number of PCs available for students on site. Having one portal to all the resources staff and students need reduces access complexity and consequently the number of support calls Connell's team receives. This has already resulted in productivity gains and a re-focus on strategic endeavors such as planning the introduction of a campus-wide Wi-Fi platform. The IT team is now able to access all the servers remotely, allowing them to perform administration tasks and troubleshoot problems from wherever they are, at any time of day. This has reduced response times and enhanced the service to users, thereby reducing overall costs.

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