

Welwyn Hatfield Council achieves single sign-on with IBM Tivoli Access Manager

Overview

■ The Challenge

Welwyn Hatfield Council provides its users with more than 20 different IT systems, each of which had its own access protocols. The complexity of access management and the frequent need to reset forgotten passwords were draining user satisfaction and increasing help-desk traffic.

■ The Solution

Consulted Pirean (www.pirean.com), an IBM Premier Business Partner, who recommended IBM Tivoli Access Manager. From a single initial log-in, the software handles password management and access for all Welwyn and Hatfield's systems.

■ The Benefits

Easy-to-use software 'learns' new access protocols as new systems are installed; users now only have to remember one sign-on, reducing the need for password resets, increasing security and boosting productivity while reducing helpdesk traffic.



Welwyn Hatfield Council provides housing, transport and related community and social services for more than 98,000 people in southern Hertfordshire. Employing nearly 700 people, the Council operates with an annual budget of around £60 million.

The council's IT environment includes more than 20 different systems, dealing with all aspects of local government management. A large amount of sensitive information is recorded – including internal financial data, housing tenancy and benefits information and council tax records – and security is therefore a key issue. Each system is protected by its own access protocols, usually involving a combination of names and variously-formatted passwords.

Most users had to access at least five or six of these systems on a daily basis, which meant remembering five or six different sets of identification details.

Passwords were often forgotten and needed to be reset, wasting time, reducing user productivity, diverting valuable resources away from more useful tasks.

"We performed a staff survey about our IT systems, and it was quite clear that password management was one of the major areas of user dissatisfaction," says Warwick Turnbull, Head of IT for Welwyn Hatfield Council. "Not only did the users have to remember a large number of passwords, but the passwords all expired at different times and often had to be composed of different combinations of alphanumeric characters. It was very difficult for users to keep track."

Meeting the challenge

Just as the issue was coming to a head, Welwyn Hatfield Council was contacted by Pirean, an IBM Premier Business Partner with considerable



expertise in information security solutions.

"Identity, security and access management are among the biggest challenges in the public sector at the moment, and Pirean has developed a range of solutions to meet these needs," says Stuart Wilson, Chief Executive Officer of Pirean.

"Because of the complexity of most public sector software environments, over one-third of calls to IT helpdesks involve resetting passwords; and there is always a danger that instead of memorizing access details, users will write them down, which can compromise security."

Pirean recommended implementing IBM Tivoli Access Manager for Enterprise Single Sign-On (TAM E-SSO), powered by Passlogix technology. The software is able to intercept and respond to password requests from almost any system or application on behalf of a user, who only needs to remember one password. The software keeps a portfolio of access details for all the different systems a user needs, automatically recognising new applications and learning their access protocols with minimal input from administrators.

Of course, users may still forget their initial sign-on details, but TAME-SSO forms a first line of defence for the absent-minded: Welwyn Hatfield Council has set the software up to prompt users with hints and questions to help them remember. As a result, it is now extremely rare for the Council's outsourced IT helpdesk to receive password reset requests.

"Best of all, the Tivoli solution can deal with password change requests

"With IBM Tivoli Access Manager, we have achieved a secure, reliable and user-friendly single sign-on solution that saves time and effort for administrators, technical support staff and the users themselves."

*Warwick Turnbull
IT Manager
Welwyn Hatfield Council*

from the applications automatically, so users no longer have to think up new passwords every 30 days – in fact, they don't even have to know what the passwords for individual applications are," says Warwick Turnbull. "Access management is now relatively hassle free for users and administrators, without compromising on security."

Less lock-outs boost productivity

"With 700 users, our helpdesk used to have four or five password reset requests each week," explains Warwick Turnbull. "The Tivoli solution has almost completely eliminated this, so our outsourced technical support workers can concentrate on more important technical support issues. Because users almost never find themselves locked out of the systems they need, we have boosted productivity too."

He concludes: "Pirean came along at just the right time, and proposed a solution which meets our needs precisely. With IBM Tivoli Access Manager, we have achieved a secure, reliable and user-friendly single sign-on solution that saves time and effort for administrators, technical support staff and the users themselves."



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