

Case Study Hartnells

Exeter law firm Hartnells selects NetPilot for all its IT security and web browsing needs.

Together with a fast broadband ADSL connection to replace a costly ISDN line, NetPilot has dramatically cut monthly telephone bills and speeded up access.

Previous solutions caused nothing but trouble for proprietor Norman Hartnell, with network crashes occurring regularly, but since the NetPilot installation there have been no problems whatsoever.

Like all solicitors, Hartnells' caseload is becoming increasingly electronic based, with on-line information gathering and email exchanges vital to the business.



Case Study

www.hartnells.co.uk

A pioneering Exeter law firm that was one of the first in Britain to install terminals on all employees' desks has opted for the NetPilot secure server appliance from Equinet to handle its ever-increasing IT security and web browsing needs.

Since having a NetPilot installed in May this year, Hartnells Solicitors has seen its telephone bills slashed considerably. ISDN bills were rising past the £300 a month level, whereas the NetPilot combined with an ADSL broadband line costs the firm just £75 per month.

"In the past we have had a few different solutions and a few different suppliers, and we had nothing but problems and network crashes," says proprietor Norman Hartnell. "Since May the Internet service has been great – we just turn it on and it works."

The solution was implemented by Equinet reseller Professional Computer Group (PCG) of Dorset, which specializes in the IT needs of the legal sector. PCG provides full system back up and remote system maintenance for Hartnells.

"Hartnells use the Web extensively," says Richie Webb of PCG. "They're benefiting from the reliability of NetPilot at the gateway, the strength of NetPilot's firewall and content filtering, and the cost-savings that come from an 'always on' ADSL connection."

It's the 'always on' nature of ADSL that makes security imperative because if a company's always online then it's also constantly vulnerable to attack from hackers. This is why NetPilot's Checkmark-accredited firewall is so important.

Making the Most of Technology

Hartnells, one of Britain's only specialist family law firms, employs 35 people at its Exeter headquarters. As long ago as 1991 the firm insisted that all employees should have a workstation, and the company has shown an enlightened attitude to IT since then.

"It's very important that solicitors have good access to the Internet nowadays," says Norman Hartnell. "There are numerous websites containing on-line law reports and other vital legal information, such as the Lord Chancellor's department and the Legal Services Commission, and it's crucial that we can access this information whenever we need it."

He believes email is another valuable tool for solicitors. "So many of our clients contact us via email that we need to keep in touch. Although we still keep hard copy files of all correspondence, that may change in the future and we'll need the facility to store email correspondence." NetPilot provides this capability.

Hartnells is also in the throes of revamping its own website and that of its affiliated family mediation business. It is also establishing a regional website for the Family Advice and Information Network (FAIN), to which other agencies such as Relate can contribute.

As for its future IT strategy, Hartnells is planning a VPN (virtual private network) to include remote workers and digital dictation, which would allow the firm's single mothers to continue working even when they have to take time off to care for sick children. It is also exploring the idea of applying e-conveyancing to family law.

Norman Hartnell is proud of the fact that everyone at Hartnells has a say in matters that affect the business – even the new building was designed by committee to ensure everyone got what they required. "When it comes to the computer network, it's the secretaries who have had the biggest input as they use computers the most," he adds.

Jennie Watson, the junior office manager, takes care of the day to day system administration tasks such as adding new users to the network and updating the anti-virus solution on PCs. "It's a part of the job that I really enjoy," says Jennie. "We have got 30 workstations, all with Internet access, but it's very straightforward to keep things up-to-date."

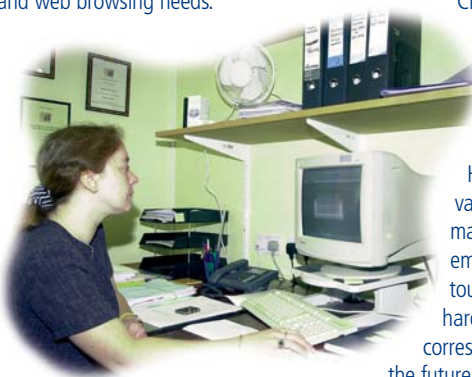
NetPilot Explained

NetPilot is a neat and easy way to bring the benefits of the Internet to small and medium-sized businesses, giving access to every LAN-based PC user. It not only makes the Internet and email cost-effective, accessible and controllable but also provides a high level of network security and fast access thanks to its unique 'boundary caching' facility.

In addition, NetPilot controls and monitors web browsing – just like a call logging system on a telephone network – so that employees are encouraged to use the resource responsibly. As well as standard 'allow' and 'block' lists, Equinet offers a subscription based service to N2H2, world leaders in the field of website filtering.

NetPilot is compatible with any transmission technology – whether ISDN, ADSL, cable modem, dial-up modem or satellite - and it also includes email-, web-, print- and file-serving capabilities.

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