

# Case Study Warners

Gloucestershire-based Warners is the latest in a long line of motor dealerships to recognise that the NetPilot secure server appliance can free them from the shackles of slow and expensive inter-site connectivity, boost network performance and improve customer service.

NetPilot units connected via a VPN (Virtual Private Network) in six sites across the county provide Internet access, email and network security for the group.

Since technical director John Warner discovered this solution, the group's networking bills have been slashed and a whole host of new applications are now possible: innovations such as 'real-time' group-wide stock status and a dealership website for parts availability.

Warners have been so impressed with the NetPilot VPN approach that they are now encouraging the PSA Group to implement a similar solution in other Peugeot and Citroen dealerships across Europe.



# Case Study

## www.warners.uk.com

**T**In these days of increasing communications between motor companies, regional operators and dealerships, more and more businesses in the motor trade want to take advantage of the speed, efficiency and cost-savings of Internet-based communications networks, but they don't want any security headaches as a result.

The Internet presents motor dealerships with a golden opportunity. At the very least, Internet connectivity is great for obtaining information on used car prices, spare parts, financing and vehicle checks. The proper use of presently available Internet technologies can result in more efficient, cost-effective and secure networks for dealerships. But what's the best way to move forward?

Equinet's NetPilot secure server appliance provides tremendous cost savings by channeling all data-communications through a single Internet connection. The option of establishing an Internet-based Virtual Private Network between affiliated sites makes a far less costly replacement for expensive leased lines between the dealership and the finance house, which improves customer service as finance deals can be arranged in 5 minutes rather than 50. It provides incredibly fast Internet access and saves even more money by caching web sites locally within the NetPilot.

NetPilot also provides the tools to prevent abuse and time wasting by its employees. NetPilot's 'block' and 'allow' lists enable the system administrator to define which sites can be accessed, while audit logs reveal who has visited what on the Web. For the highest levels of control, N2H2's market leading website filtering software can be supplied in NetPilot, as can Sophos' Anti-Virus solution. With NetPilot, all internal and external email can be checked for viruses using the latest virus signatures, which are automatically updated daily.

### Warner brothers motor ahead

John Warner is something of a self-confessed hybrid. Highly technical, he brings a considerable amount of IT expertise to his family's chain of motor dealerships. When John Warner explains the reasoning behind the selection of NetPilot VPN as

the company's preferred solution for Internet access, email and network security across the group, there's no doubt he very clearly understands the benefits and his enthusiasm for technology is infectious.

He first heard about NetPilot via an article in IT Week. "I have a weekly routine," he admits. "Each Friday and Saturday I spend three hours in the hot-room at a local Turkish bath, and this gives me time to read all the trade and technology magazines. This routine is extremely important to me and it's a great way of unwinding while doing something extremely valuable at the same time. It enables me to define strategies, keep up to date on new technology and gauge where the market is going."

John, whose older brother Michael is MD and Chairman of Warners, regularly scans Computing, Computer Weekly, IT Week, Secure Computing and a variety of telephony and communications magazines when they arrive on his desks and extracts articles that interest him. These go on a pile for his weekly read.

"When I read about NetPilot I knew it would be ideal for our needs," says John. "We had previously considered building our own server and installing a proxy but we concluded that this would be a bigger liability than not having anything at all. Security is very high on my agenda and NetPilot's VPN connectivity gives us all the security we need."

He believes NetPilot is a valuable tool for motor dealerships. "It has provided us with a seamless, simple yet extremely secure means of integrating our group network, allowing remote sites to have controlled data access whilst giving each satellite location an effective and controlled gateway for email and Internet access."

### Tailored for motor dealers

Warners have an in-house software developer who has written code for a used car stock tracking system. NetPilot is integral in making this system work because it enables the establishment of a company intranet.

"Keeping track of what's in stock across groups of motor dealers is difficult

because core systems are not usually able to move quickly enough to record 'real-time' information," says John. "If customers need information there and then, there's no guarantee the information on the system is completely up to date, as different dealerships have different ways of logging and inputting the information. It often depends on who runs the franchise."

Warners new system envelopes the core database and brings it together with an intermediary interface that shows the accurate status of each vehicle in stock. The information is fed to both the Warners intranet and the Peugeot website. Warners would like to see the whole Peugeot/Citroen group adopt these practices and talks are underway to achieve this aim.

### No more expensive leased lines

One of the major benefits of NetPilot is that it's compatible with any transmission technology, including broadband ADSL. Very often, motor dealers – just like many other businesses – have been forced to purchase expensive leased lines from BT or one of the other telecoms carriers. As ADSL is rolled out to more and more regions, truly cost-effective Internet-based communication is the obvious replacement.

John Warner explains that the 128k leased line from Telewest at his showrooms was costing many thousands per annum. Now, a 2 megabit ADSL connection via an agreed PSA corporate deal with Demon Internet costs £1,500 per annum. Not only is the connection cheaper and more secure (because of the VPN), the vastly increased capacity speeds up access and enables many of the Internet based initiatives that John is introducing.

The Warners Group is just one of the many motor dealerships to recognize that NetPilot is the 'all-in-one' method of supplying all the connectivity, speed and security they need. NetPilot is driving companies such as Warners towards maximizing all the benefits the Internet has to offer.

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