

NEC COMPUTER INTERNATIONAL RELIES ON BT INFONET'S MANAGED EXTRANET SERVICES TO CONNECT ITS EUROPEAN OPERATIONS



NEC Computers International is a subsidiary of NEC Corporation responsible for the manufacturing and sales of personal and notebook computers, as well as servers and monitors to the business market, under the Packard Bell brand, and the consumer market, under the NEC brand. Based in Wijchen, The Netherlands, NEC Computers International has two major production plants in Livingston, Scotland and Angers, France. In total, the Company employs more than 3,500 people around the world.

Building A Common Access Method

Harry Richards, NEC Computers International's IT Manager, is responsible for overseeing the Company's network communications throughout Europe. Recently, NEC built a European Data Centre in Wijchen, however the Company lacked a common access method for its mission critical applications. Looking to connect the newly built EDC to the rest of its offices in Europe, as well as to external partners, NEC turned to BT Infonet.

Connecting its external users, which include service and logistics partners, to mission-critical applications is of high importance to NEC. Additionally, NEC Computers International has a number of external customer call centres that require 24/7 access to NEC's internal trouble ticket system and database. Prior to the Wijchen Data Centre, NEC had constructed various point-to-point solutions that only gave the Company a modicum of control over the various user groups that accessed its mission critical information.

For ordering and tracking of products, NEC's logistics partners were connected to internal resources through a dedicated leased line or a traditional dial-up connection. NEC's data partners were only able to access NEC's dispatch and service information systems through either a dial-up telnet session or a basic web interface.

In both of these access methods, NEC was unable to distinguish between internal and external users, nor could it manage its diverse user groups in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Additionally, the legacy system gave NEC limited control over users gaining access to its internal applications over the Internet, thus exposing the Company to a potential security risk.

Implementing Managed Extranet Services

In developing a new access system, NEC had to confront a number of issues, including the fact that it had numerous applications based on a wide variety of technology platforms.

The goals for NEC Computers International's Extranet were clearly defined as follows:

- » Enable collaboration with International logistics and service partners
- » Provide easy and secure remote access through the Internet to NEC's mobile employees and Small

Office/Home Office (SoHo) based workers

- » Provide one, standard way of connecting employees and logistics and service partners to NEC's internal resources
- » Create a stable access platform that would be highly adaptable in the future
- » Provide all users with a single user management interface

In less than eight weeks, BT Infonet replaced NEC's various legacy point-to-point solutions and delivered a Frame Relay-based Extranet that provided a common access method for both internal and external users.

Delivering Results With MES

After working closely with Mr. Richards and his team, BT Infonet recommended removing the various point-to-point solutions, and replacing them with BT Infonet's Managed Extranet Services (MES) delivering heightened levels of security, reliability and manageability. In less than eight weeks, BT Infonet replaced NEC's various legacy point-to-point solutions and delivered a Frame Relay-based Extranet that provided a common access method for both internal and external users.

In addition, BT Infonet improved broadband access for NEC's growing population of small and home office workers, which helped the Company realise additional cost savings and productivity gains by providing its workers with anytime, anywhere extranet access.

With MES, NEC no longer needs to develop web fronts for its applications, build portals or set up dedicated leased lines or dial-up connections. Furthermore, NEC's support, maintenance and infrastructure costs have been greatly reduced.

"We chose BT Infonet's MES for three key reasons," said Harry Richards, IT Manager of NEC Computers International. "Firstly, their proxy server technology added a layer of security that is well-managed. Secondly, their team — from the sales people to the engineers — understood the technology and how to use it. Finally, their managed service model fit our low headcount/fast deployment management approach like a glove."

BT Infonet's Managed Extranet Services has allowed NEC International to obtain control over all of its internal and external users from one central point. Moreover, MES has enabled NEC to provide secure, managed access to all of NEC's corporate applications without requiring any changes to its existing applications. The eight weeks it took BT Infonet to deploy the extranet and make it extranet operational, compared with the many months it historically took NEC to build in-house solutions, freed NEC's internal IT department and allowed them to focus on core initiatives rather than network design and maintenance.

Additionally, BT Infonet's comprehensive service level agreements guarantee 99.9% availability, in addition to providing rapid policy changes, proactive traffic and trend reports, and 24/7 technical support.

The end result is a fully managed extranet that delivers on all of NEC's business objectives.

Mr. Richards added, "By using BT Infonet's MES we have created one single point of entry into the NEC network domain, enabling multiple third parties with different requirements to gain access in a uniform way.

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For example, our external call centres can access our FAQ information databases, as well as our extranet sites, through the Internet. In addition, MES allows them to open a trouble ticket through a direct link to our trouble ticket system using their own Internet connection. Our service and logistics partners have a secure, direct link to our Supply Chain Services application for relevant logistical information, as well as to our service maintenance application, over any Internet connection."

About BT Infonet

Infonet Services Corporation, a member of the BT Group plc group of companies, known for its quality of service, is a leading provider of managed network communications services for multinational entities.

Employing a unique consultative approach, BT Infonet offers integrated solutions optimising the complex relationship between enterprise applications and the global network. Extensive project management capabilities are the foundation for the services and solution offerings (broadband, Internet, intranet, multimedia, videoconferencing, wireless/remote access, local provisioning, application and consulting services) positioning BT Infonet as a single-source partner for multinational entities. In particular, BT Infonet IP VPN solutions offer multinationals a unique combination of Private and Public IP services as well as a full set of Managed Security and Mobility Services.

Rated "Best in Class" overall in Telemark's survey of Global Managed Data Network Services, Infonet Services Corporation has also won "Best Customer Care" and "Best Carrier" at the World Communication Awards. Founded in 1970, Infonet Services Corporation owns and operates The World Network®, accessible from more than 180 countries, and provides local service support in over 70 countries and territories.

Additional information about Infonet Services Corporation is available at www.bt.infonet.com.

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