

Loadbalancer.org helps Nottinghamshire Healthcare to deliver secure and flexible remote access to clinical applications

When Nottinghamshire Healthcare acquired 2,200 community-based medical professionals, it needed to find a way to allow these new employees to access data and systems from third-party sites, without jeopardising the security of patient information. It selected products from Loadbalancer.org and can now deliver secure, flexible and reliable remote access to clinical applications from any device, on any network, at any location.



NHS
Nottinghamshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust



IT security is of paramount importance in the healthcare industry. By using solutions from Loadbalancer.org we can protect our clinical applications and data, without having to compromise on the flexible remote access that users need.”

Andy Spencer
Systems Team Leader, Nottinghamshire Healthcare

Challenges

- Improve access to applications for employees, while maximising IT security

Solution

- 4 x Loadbalancer.org Enterprise R20 products
- 4 x Loadbalancer.org Virtual Appliance Enterprise MAX software licences

Benefits

- Gives community-based employees secure, flexible access to applications
- Allows employees to access email securely from any mobile phone
- Improves application availability, by avoiding downtime in the datacentres
- Delivers a better IT experience for 12,000 IT users
- Provides a versatile, well supported tool for the IT team

Challenges

Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust provides integrated healthcare services including mental health, intellectual disability and community healthcare services. In 2011, it acquired 2,200 additional members of community healthcare staff from another local trust, increasing its IT users to around 12,000. Most of the new employees were community-based nurses and healthcare professionals, who worked from a variety of medical centres, hospitals and other sites owned and operated by third party organisations.

“This represented a significant and complex challenge from an IT perspective,” recalls Andy Spencer, Systems Team Leader at Nottinghamshire Healthcare. “We had to be able to provide these newly acquired employees with a means of accessing our applications securely, using networks and devices that were outside of our control.”

Solution

To address this challenge, Nottinghamshire Healthcare created a virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) and selected two clustered pairs of Enterprise R20 products from Loadbalancer.org as part of this environment. Its new IT partner Cutter Project, then optimised this VDI environment, taking advantage of the inherent flexibility of the Enterprise R20 to facilitate secure desktop access for employees connecting via three distinctly different access channels: the internal Nottinghamshire Healthcare network; the shared NHS N3 network; and the public Internet.



Impressed by the performance and value of the four Enterprise R20 products, Nottinghamshire Healthcare subsequently purchased four Loadbalancer.org virtual appliances to help it further improve the desktop IT experience for users. “The solutions from Loadbalancer.org are much cheaper than other options, but still offer all the security and performance we need,” Spencer says.

One pair of the virtual Loadbalancer.org appliances is used to secure the organisation’s Microsoft Outlook web servers, enabling employees to access email using iPhones, Blackberries and other mobile devices. The other pair of Loadbalancer.org virtual appliances is used to

balance traffic to clinical applications in its two separate datacentres.

Results

The deployment of Loadbalancer.org solutions has enabled Nottinghamshire Healthcare to maximise security in its VDI environment, which is absolutely critical given the sensitive nature of the patient data held by the organisation. “Loadbalancer.org publishes frequent security updates and blogs, which gives us a lot of confidence in the company,” Spencer says.

While improving security, the Loadbalancer.org solutions nonetheless still give employees all the flexibility they need to access their desktops, using any device, over any network and from any site. Consequently, remote and community-based healthcare professionals, such as midwives, can easily access the applications necessary to deliver a high quality service to patients, wherever and whenever they need to.



Our users have more flexible and reliable access to clinical applications than ever before”

The use of Loadbalancer.org solutions also ensures the high availability of the clinical applications that are vital for the delivery of fast, effective patient care. If the IT team wants to move devices around physically in its datacentres or perform maintenance on a server, for instance, it can do so easily with no interruption in service for users and no need to schedule downtime. “It is very easy to make changes on the fly,” Spencer says.

All this means that employees at Nottinghamshire Healthcare now have a far better IT experience. “Our users have more flexible and reliable access to clinical applications than ever before,” muses Spencer. “Mobile access to email wasn’t something we could have provided in the past, as we didn’t have an affordable way of securing our Exchange environment. Now, this is a facility that employees rely on every day.”

The IT team at Nottinghamshire Healthcare has found the Loadbalancer.org products both easy to use and highly versatile. “You can do a lot with them; far more than we originally thought when we placed our first order,” says Spencer. “We also appreciate the support package provided by Loadbalancer.org. It is good value for money, and the support team has always been genuinely helpful.”

