



Norwich School

Historic School gets 21st Century Network to support e-learning in an increasingly mobile environment

Challenges

- Find an alternative to an existing controller-based solution that could scale connectivity across the 18 building school, without added cost or complexity.
- To provide safe and secure access for over 1000 pupils, staff and guests, to enable increased adoption of wireless and smart devices in the teaching environment.
- Provision of effective centralised management capabilities for entire network.

Results

- Aerohive's cooperative control provided the scalability needed, without additional controllers or unseen management costs.
- High performance WLAN that enables maximum availability and reliability needed for the learning environment.
- Control and management of entire network from one location, and the ability to apply safe and secure access and policies for different user types with private pre-shared keys (PPSK).
- Substantial productivity gains for IT, receiving fewer requests from staff and pupils having trouble connecting to the network.
- A feature-rich and scalable platform for the continued expansion of its mobile environment, including external area connectivity and Apple e-learning environments.

About Norwich School

Norwich School is one of the oldest independent schools in the UK. With its roots dating as far back as 1089, the school is renowned as a leading educational establishment for young people aged 7-18 years. Marrying its strong sense of tradition with the latest technology innovations is a key part in maintaining its reputation. So, as e-learning requirements rose along with the influx of mobile devices, deploying wireless connectivity across the school's 18 buildings became paramount.

"Ensuring we have the right technology to apply the best teaching methods is critical to our pupils education and the school's continued success. Moving to a mobile environment with a robust wireless solution is a must-have and we're pleased to have chosen Aerohive as the foundation for this."

—Steve Banyard

Network Manager, Norwich School

The Challenge

Norwich School had an existing controller-based WiFi solution installed in three of its buildings. Faced with an upwardly mobile students-base, and increasing numbers of smart devices on the network, this set-up was no longer viable and extending secure and robust connectivity across the entire school became a priority for Norwich.

However, according to Steve Banyard, Network Manager at the school, it became clear very quickly that the incumbent solution would be costly and complex to scale throughout its 18 building premises, requiring additional controllers, along with added management overheads. He explains:

"We already had an existing controller-based solution in a few of our buildings, but as we started to experience a high demand from students and teachers requiring Wi-Fi access in and out of class for their devices, such as iPads and laptops, we had to think again. We soon realised the current system was unsustainable, as the cost to add additional controllers was way too high as far as we were concerned."

Banyard and the IT team assessed a number of solutions in the marketplace, with scalability, performance and ease of manageability top of the list. Working closely with trusted IT partner AIT, the team evaluated Aerohive and immediately found it's controller-less architecture compelling.

In contrast to its existing system and others in the marketplace, Aerohive's cooperative control access points require no network controllers or overlay networks. This would provide the scalability Norwich needed, without additional controllers or unseen management costs. When coupled with Aerohive's centralised management capabilities, Banyard and the team found Aerohive to be the most cost-effective, secure and resilient solution to build a 21st century Network at the school.

The Solution

AIT installed Aerohive AP121 Access Points (APs) throughout the school in all classrooms and administrative areas. AIT completed the rollout in less than two weeks, which also saw the team overcome the inherent challenges of this 900-year-old setting.

Based at the historic cathedral, each day the pupils and teachers go about their business in and around magnificent mediaeval buildings. However, this made it a very challenging environment for a wireless rollout as Simon Round, Wireless Sales Manager at Aerohive platinum partner, AIT explains:

"The premises include a medieval chapel with ten-foot thick walls in places. Our challenge was to provide a high performance WLAN that would enable maximum availability and reliability needed for the learning environment. An intelligent deployment of Aerohive APs tackled this perfectly. Unlike controller-based solutions where there is a single point of failure, Aerohive's co-operative control means the APs communicate with each other, providing greater resiliency for user traffic and minimising bottlenecks."

Norwich also implemented Aerohive's HiveManager Online Network Management System. This means the IT team can now manage and control network and user access from one location. Providing safe and secure wireless access is essential at the school, which is where the private pre-shared keys (PPSK) function in HiveManager Online comes into its own, providing effective guest access for any visitors to the school. The PPSK function allows the IT manager to provide unique pass phrases to each individual guest, eliminating any risk of a security breach for the user. In addition, the administrator is able to quickly and easily revoke access for a single individual if necessary.

The Benefits

The network is now providing over 1000 pupils, staff and visitors with robust uninterrupted Wi-Fi access throughout the school. Students are able to bring in their own tablet devices to use in class and access learning resources, while members of staff use the network more and more to fulfil key administrative duties.

Banyard adds, "Within a very short space of time of Aerohive being deployed, we quickly started to notice substantial productivity gains, receiving far less requests from staff and pupils having trouble connecting to the network. Also, Access Points can now be added as and when they're required, without any additional overheads, so we have the cost effective scalability we were looking for."

From the outset, Norwich wanted a wireless solution that would meet the school's needs today and for years to come. With wireless playing an ever-bigger role in the day-to-day running of the school, the scalability and ease of management are key attributes of the Aerohive WLAN, providing a simple path for plans to deploy external APs to provide connectivity in the school's outside areas.

Banyard concludes, "Ensuring we have the right technology to apply the best teaching methods is critical to our pupils' education and the school's continued success. Moving to a mobile environment with a robust wireless solution is a must-have and we're pleased to have chosen Aerohive as the foundation for this."



Contact us today to learn how your organization can benefit from Aerohive wireless LAN architecture.

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