Zeitschrift: Comtec : Informations- und Telekommunikationstechnologie = information and telecommunication technology

Herausgeber: Swisscom

Band: 81 (2003)

Heft: 10

Artikel: Freeing the shackles with secure remote working

Autor: Maceleod, Calum

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-876696

VPN

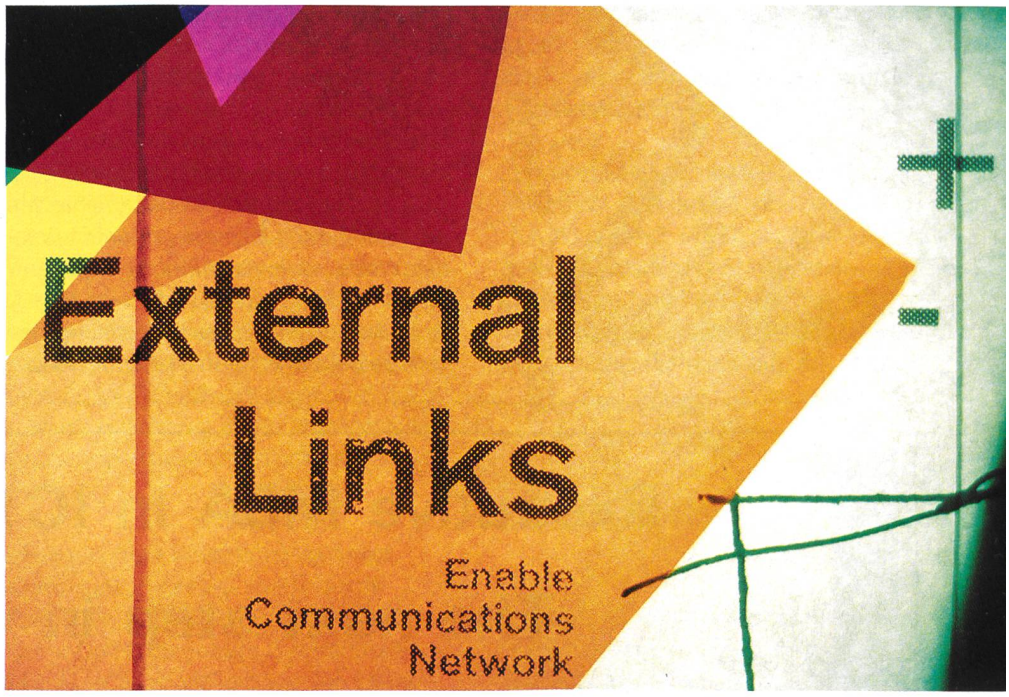
Freeing the Shackles with secure Remote Working

We all hanker for the opportunity to work less hours and avoid wasting time traveling to and from work. If you counted up the average commute of two hours a day you could claw back by avoiding this daily commute an extra week each month, or nearly three months every year. This article highlights the way organisations are changing the manner they work with secure remote access.

Thankfully, more and more large corporations are looking at ways to enhance the working environment and to find ways to cut this daily commute. At the same time companies are being faced with a mountain of challenges such as providing:

CALUM MACLEOD

- e-enabled access to services for their staff, clients and suppliers,
- increasingly providing a 24/7-service,
- providing remote access for field workers while ensuring that the corporate network remains secure and protected.



Remote working includes chances and risks.

Advantages of Remote Working

The arguments therefore to provide the opportunity for remote or home working becomes stronger every day as the daily commute is becoming physically impossible and stressful for commuters. It can be the cornerstone of an employer's flexible working policy. Past evidence has shown that it helps with staff retention, which saves money. It can significantly reduce the need for expensive office space. Staff can often be more productive working at home for at least part of the week. Staff save hundreds, if not thousands of pounds in commuting costs. They are happier, because they have a better quality of family life and much more flexibility. Remote working helps to empower people and give them greater responsibility.

Taking these factors together, society, employers and employees have to ask themselves if the traditional commuting model is still valid, especially with the change from a 9 to 5 work pattern, to a 24/7 service provision requirement.

The necessary technology

Especially as, in the past year, a new technology has emerged, called clientless VPNs (virtual private networks) or SSL VPNs from companies such as Netilla Networks. This new technology, delivered as a single appliance that can be installed quickly and easily in an organisation's data center, enables remote and home workers, using a web browser, to see and use everything that's in the office – update their diary, find out about meetings, read minutes, amend and print documents, change and update databases. It provides the same «look and feel» as an office-based PC, and is accessible anywhere there's an Internet connection. It brings the IT facilities of the office into the home of the authorized worker in a secure manner.

The appeal of a «virtual private network» or VPN is easy to see: It allows an organisation to connect its branch offices, remote employees and partners by using the public Internet, which now extends nearly everywhere, rather than expensive dedicated lines from the

phone company. But precisely because the Internet is a public communications medium, care must be taken to safeguard these private and privileged corporate communications by encrypting them at both the user and corporate end points – thus using the Internet simply as a data tunnel through which encrypted communications are sent.

Who and how benefits of this technolgy?

The medical profession has been one of the first sectors to really grasp this technology, enabling doctors to quickly and easily gain results for patients online in a secure manner – providing them with the information to be able to act swiftly, update medical records, look at x-rays online, order medicines and arrange immediate treatment for their patients. The doctors have taken to the technology because it is inexpensive, simple to use and requires little training – the screen on their laptop or PDA looks exactly as it does on their computers in the hospitals, requiring little help from their IT departments and allowing them the autonomy they are used to. The technology also suits the working pattern of Doctors as they are often on the move and don't want to be carrying medical and confidential files around with them. It has equally compelling benefits for the hospital's IT staff, who no longer need to worry about configuring communications software onto the hundreds of PCs – most of which they don't even own – of their affiliated physicians.

Other sectors to have grasped this technology have been manufacturing, finance, exhibitions, retail, shipping and the public sector. All of which have taken on the technology because:

- It provides fast access.
- It is easy to use.
- It is accessible from anywhere over the Internet.
- It is simple and rapid to deploy (can often be installed and activated in just a few hours).
- It provides high security (at least 128-bit SSL encryption) to remote users, whether they are at home, at their place of work or on the move.

The technology also ties into smart cards, tokens and most other corporate security methods to provide even more stringent «two factor» authentication. It cost up to 40% less than earlier remote-access VPN technology. Another advantage is the ability for organisations to customise the data accessible to each user: a corporate vice president, for example, might be able to tap into more resources than a field-based salesperson.

Most PC support problems can be solved in the main office, so avoiding the problem of a 5-minute fault call in the office becoming a 2 hours 5 minute support visit to a home worker.

Technological developments have given us the means to work virtually in the country, if not the world, at any time of the day. A 24/7 society needs 24/7 public services and the only cost effective and socially acceptable way they can be delivered, is by implementing remote and home working. 2

Calum Macleod, *European Director of Netilla Networks*

Netilla Networks

Netilla Networks, Inc. is a leading global provider of enterprise-class secure remote access solutions. The Netilla family of SSL VPN appliances gives organisations the power to make their mission-critical applications and resources instantly available to employees and trusted partners anywhere via standard web browsers, while safeguarding internal networks. Compared to traditional VPN technologies, the Netilla Security Platform is a versatile, simple and quick-to-deploy solution that lowers the total cost of remote access security management. Netilla's products are available through a worldwide network of value-added resellers. Netilla can be reached at www.netilla.com.

Zusammenfassung

Mit sicherer Telearbeit Fesseln sprengen

Eine 24/7-Gesellschaft braucht einen 24/7-Service. Und der einzige kosteneffiziente und sozial akzeptable Weg, auf dem dieser Dienst gewährleistet werden kann, ist das Schaffen von Möglichkeiten, zu Hause zu arbeiten. Tatsächlich kann ein Pendler, der täglich zwei Stunden für das Pendeln aufwendet, mit Telearbeit im Durchschnitt jährlich bis drei Monate an Zeit einsparen. In den letzten sechs Monaten konnte in England ein enormer Zuwachs von Menschen, die zu Hause ihrer Arbeit nachgehen, verzeichnet werden. Ein Grund dafür liegt in der Popularität der sicheren virtuellen privaten Netzwerke (VPNs oder SSL VPNs). Diese Technologie gibt Arbeitnehmenden die Gelegenheit, via Computer von irgendwoher mit dem Hauptbüro des Unternehmens verbunden zu arbeiten. Alles, was sie brauchen, ist ein Internetanschluss. Dieser Beitrag zeigt auf, wie Menschen in verschiedenen Branchen sich diese Technologie zunutze machen, wie sie von der sicheren Telearbeit profitieren.