

Anglia Regional Co-Op

TFMNetworks' MPLS IP VPN solution enabled ARCS to double throughput, improve resilience and reliability and reduce costs by nearly 40%

Mark Kelby ARCS

Growth and change are the key themes at Anglia Regional Co-Op (ARCS) as the society strives to confirm its local credentials by empowering employees and driving quality and variety instore – and quality IP network communication is at the heart of developments.

Acquisitive growth enabled ARCS to rapidly develop its customer proposition but left Infrastructure Manager, Mark Kelby, with a major challenge – integrating a number of disparate networks to support the forward-thinking strategy of the group. “We needed to establish a platform for the future, says Mark – one approach that would enable instore services to develop regardless of the underpinning technology.” What’s more the existing networks – an uncoordinated mix of dial up, ISDN and leased lines were ineffective and costly. “Actually, that helped us to act decisively, Mark added, because the opportunity was there to upgrade capability and reduce cost - but we had to seize the moment.... and quickly.”

After speaking to a number of potential suppliers it was TFMNetworks' solution that stood out. “TFMNetworks listened that bit harder to our requirements, recalls Mark. I was interested in the cost benefits and flexibility that Internet solutions could offer but concerned about committing reliability and security to the public Internet. Once TFMNetworks' explained that we could have the best of both worlds by deploying a private network Internet solution based on MPLS (multi protocol label switching) it became clear that we had the answer.”



Account Manager Tony Stiles elaborates, “MPLS means that all the data packets are uniquely labelled and can be tracked throughout the network and because the network is private, security is just as effective as traditional leased line or frame

relay solutions. The majority of network costs lie in the connectivity – primarily local loop links or ISDN call charges. By deploying business grade fixed-cost broadband connections we doubled bandwidth, achieved greater reliability by eliminating single point of failure hub sites and overall managed to save ARCS over 30% across their whole network.”



ARCS understand that they could deal direct with a telco such as BT. However, as Mark Kelby recognises, it's not the owner of the wires and fibre that adds the value, it's who designs, implements and manages the

services over it that makes the difference. “We like dealing with TFMNetworks because we know all their people by name and they make it easy for us by owning the whole problem, not just one bit of it. That means we don't have to get involved with different network providers, equipment vendors and network managers because TFM take that pain away. They are easy and constructive to talk to as well and that makes planning expansion and service development discussions more productive and interactive.”

With the network in place, supporting instore email and Intranet access for employees and faster transactions for customers, ARCS are already looking forward. Mark concludes. “The VPN solution means that we have a common network platform capable of enabling future applications such as streaming video and real-time stock management across the group. That positions us to offer real instore benefits for customers and real competitive advantage for ARCS.

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