

Kent County Council Streamlines Support to 600+ Schools with SolarWinds Network Monitoring and Management

Proactive Analyses of Remote Servers and Network infrastructure Helps Deliver Reliable Filtered Internet Access to Over 50,000 Students across the County

AUSTIN, TX — JANUARY 8, 2008 — SolarWinds, a leader in network management software announced today that the Kent Community Network, a Kent County Council Project, relies on SolarWinds Orion and its integrated modules to maintain the health of its network, servers and applications at more than 600 schools across the county that are connected to the Kent Community Network.

“Ensuring reliable Internet access is provided to schools across the county is essential, as more of the curriculum is delivered online,” explains Marc Turner, WAN Development Officer for Kent County Council. “Our wide area network has grown extensively over the last few years and based on our previous good experiences with the SolarWinds Engineers Toolset product; in 2002 it was felt that an upgrade to Orion would help us with both day-to-day management and proactive support across the 600+ schools internet connectivity that we look after.”

Orion is deployed at one of the Kent Community Network’s resilient datacentres in Maidstone and actively monitors 981 nodes and a total of 5260 network elements at over 600 schools across the region. The system is used by the WAN development and helpdesk teams for network performance metrics and SNMP monitoring. “Utilisation and latency are key factors for us,” explains Mr. Turner. “We routinely act on reports generated by the system to make improvements to our network provisioning to ensure that each school receives the high quality service they expect.”

Orion is also used as an assessment tool to ensure that the Council is getting agreed service levels from its managed network services provider Unisys.

Tom Bell, Service Desk Manager for the Kent Community Network adds, “the loss of Internet access or a failure of the filtering software can completely ruin a lesson and we actively try to spot potential problems before they escalate – this is a task particularly suited to Orion.”

Bell highlights a recent incident where an automated patch process on a number of Windows servers located onsite failed to correctly initialise an essential service for a number of schools. “In this case, the alerts defined in Orion notified us before the school had even opened, allowing us to solve the problem remotely before the school was even aware of an issue.”

The success of the deployment has now propted the team to look at other areas where SolarWinds can provide benefit. “We are now considering a pilot to expand the monitoring to cover the school LANs, and giving the local IT manager visibility of the statistics which will assist schools’ network managers in supporting their networks,” Marc concludes.