plumtalk

We wish you all the compliments of the season and best wishes for a Happy and Prosperous New Year

December 2006

plum communications

Head Office:
Bright Street
Oldham
OL8 4AB

t: 0845 373 2450
f: 0845 373 2451
info@plumcom.co.uk
www.plumcom.co.uk

offices in Manchester and Fylde

Secure Service for Victim Support

Plum Communications has been praised for creating a secure computer network for the Victim Support and Witness Service. Sophisticated software installed by Plum has ensured that the service's PCs are all networked and information they hold is strictly confidential.

Plum has undertaken work for a number of Victim Support and Witness Service branches, including Manchester and Lancashire. Its most recent contract was for the 16 offices in Merseyside.

PICTURE SHOWS: Bernard Mooney of Victim Support Merseyside and Peter Savic of Plum Communications testing the remote access of the Virtual Private Network.

Peter Savic, of Plum Communications said: "They wanted a network that was fast and secure, so we designed a secure private network which involved the installation of SonicWALL firewalls with broadband connectivity at each site."

The most important task was to make the internet connection secure because of the sensitive nature of the data being transferred via email.

"We were very conscious that security was the biggest issue, so we put in the firewalls and restricted access to staff only. A lot of companies don't have security systems to protect their data, but it is incredibly important and not only for protecting confidentiality.

effective communications for business   *www.plumcom.co.uk*

➧ "A virus can completely debilitate a computer, result in security breaches and/or make any information on it irretrievable and result in security breaches."

The computers at each branch of the Merseyside charity were linked together with a Virtual Private Network (VPN), so staff can email each other easily and access common files.

Though the main objective was to make the computer system secure, the overhaul masterminded by Plum has also has saved the charity time and money by reducing telephone costs and administration.

Plum reduced the number of telephone lines in the offices and cut line rental costs by £130 a month, switched the charity to a lower tariff for calls and consolidated all the phone bills into one monthly invoice.

Peter said: "We installed broadband because the offices had been using a dial-up system to access the internet.

"This saved time because broadband is so much faster than dial-up and the fixed monthly cost for broadband worked out much cheaper than the cost of the dialed calls."

He added: "There were 50 different lines each with a line rental fee and we reduced those. The accounts department was also having to cope with lots of different bills and we have put everything together on one bill for them and each call is itemised."

Bernard Mooney, Finance Director for Victim Support and Witness Service Merseyside, said: "The new system was installed mainly so that we could download information from the police and the courts securely. We now have a secure email facility, which is crucial.

"The broadband connection makes everything quicker and the SonicWALL firewall ensures that we can guarantee confidentiality.

"The VPN system, which links the offices, and which Peter recommended, is also working very well."

He added: "We were using dial-up, which was slow and expensive and we were relying on the fax for referrals to the service, then we were typing the details into the computer, which was very time-consuming. We have installed software at two of our District offices to ensure that it works properly before rolling it out to the other five Districts. When this is completed it will save a great deal of time and ensure confidentiality by eliminating the faxed referral document. When we have done this we will have a paperless referral system.

"We chose Plum because they have worked successfully with our head office and with Victim Support and Witness Services in the region.

"We are really pleased with the work they have done. It has certainly been well worth doing and although we had the new systems installed for security reasons, the bonus has been that the work done by Plum has also saved us time and money in a variety of ways."

The Victim Support and Witness Service offices throughout the UK help victims of crime and court witnesses and are individual registered charities.

information

The Plum Communications solution included the provision of:
- A Virtual Private Network (VPN) linking 25 computers across 16 sites
- A SonicWALL firewall at each location to provide secure data transfer
- Broadband connection to all sites for high speed communication

In addition to providing the secure network Plum also reduced telephone and administration costs by:
- Reducing line rental charges by £130 per month.
- Switching calls to a more cost effective Plum tariff.
- Consolidating all bills onto one monthly itemised invoice.
- Stabilised internet access costs through a fixed broadband charge.

For more information on how your organisation can benefit from similar technology or to request a free audit of your requirements please call 0161 633 7335 or visit www.plumcom.com

Energy Audit Reduces Costs

Plum customers can now make savings on their energy and water utility bills thanks to an arrangement with Blackpool Utilities.

The Blackpool based business has provided energy audits to companies throughout the UK who have then made significant savings on gas and electricity.

PICTURE SHOWS: Peter Savic of Plum Communications and Eddie Fewings of Blackpool Utilities taking a break between audits.

Blackpool Utilities' Eddie Fewings said there was a great synergy between the two businesses which would work to the advantage of their clients. "We have been looking for a telecommunications partner for some time," he said. "The breadth of experience at Plum, together with the way the business is set up, made a natural partnership for an energy procurement specialist like ourselves.

"The utilities sector is a very demanding market requiring specialist knowledge. We have the expertise in gas and electricity procurement and we are confident of Plum's ability to find our clients the best deal for telecommunications."

Peter said "There will be no charge for either the energy or the communications audits so our clients have nothing to lose," he said. "Utility costs have been rising in all areas and this is an ideal way for all companies to reduce their overheads."

On average, Plum Communications saves clients between 20 and 40 per cent on their telephony charges. So if you are spending £500 per month you could save between £100 to £200 a month.

Blackpool Utilities also offers an audit of water charges and is providing developers of brownfield sites with consultancy services for organising new energy connections.

Free Telephone Equipment Audit

Plum Communications is offering businesses a free review of their telephone systems including analysis of current equipment, service costs and future requirements.

These highly popular reviews have helped other businesses save several thousand pounds per annum and have provided advice on how to invest effectively in new technology.

When incorporated with a lines and calls review this allows companies to set their budgets for the coming years knowing that they will have an effective communications system at an affordable price backed up with great customer support.

To book a telephone equipment audit and/or lines and calls review please call Plum Communications on 0161 633 7335 or email info@plumcom.co.uk.

glossary

VPN
Virtual Private Network
Connection of one or more locations for data and voice applications usually over IP circuits. Users may be connected by broadband (ADSL or leased line) or mobile data or public data hotspots.

FIREWALL
A security device used to control access to a network. Most firewalls can be configured to authorise users for connection and reject unauthorised users. Additional features include inspection of data packets to ensure that they are legitimate, anti virus screening and content filtering.

ROUTER
A device used to connect to another network, a typical shared ADSL connection requires a router to connect the PCs to the ADSL network (and the internet). As most routers incorporate a firewall we recommend a router for ADSL connection instead of a modem.

MODEM
Device used to connect a single PC to a network, not as secure as a router and essential the PC has an integral firewall if a modem is used. We recommend a router for most connections.

BROADBAND
8Mb ADSL Broadband only £19 per month and Office Service only £25 per month

Plum Customers can now purchase ADSL Broadband for just £19 per month plus VAT. Download speed is up to 8Mb depending upon distance from exchange and line quality.

This type of connections is intended for one or a few PCs. For larger locations we have an Office Service at £25 per month (plus VAT) which allows many PCs to share the same connection.

All Plum ADSL connections are provided with a static IP address, mail sending via SMTP and if required web space and email handling.

Plum also provide Domain registration and hosting and for customers on the move we provide webmail which allows emails to be collected from the plum website.

Migration to the service is free and for a limited time the company is providing free activation subject to a minimum contract period.

MOBILES
Free Audit of your Mobile Costs

Plum provide a free audit of mobile costs and a recommendation on potential savings. We offer tariffs from all 6 main networks and also our own bespoke tariff for low volume users with line rental from £4 per month

A wide range of handsets are available and full itemised billing is available through the on line service. High volume users will benefit from specially designed bundled tariffs. Full analysis of bills is available as part of the plum service.

Single handsets can also be purchased on line from the Plum website www.plumcom.co.uk.

TELEPHONE LINES AND CALLS
Free Audit of your Telephone Charges

Are you paying too much for your telephone calls? We provide a free audit of your current telecoms spend including calls and line rentals. Savings of 20% to 40% are typical and all charges can be shown on one monthly bill. There is no loss of service and if you need to make changes in the future you will benefit from a single number with dedicated account manager.

TELEPHONE SYSTEMS
Audit of your Telephone Equipment

Plum Communications is offering businesses a free review of their telephone systems including analysis of current equipment, service costs and future requirements. These highly popular reviews have helped other businesses save several thousand pounds per annum and have provided advice on how to invest effectively in new technology.

For further information about any of the articles in this newsletter or to request additional paper copies please contact:

plum communications Ltd
Head Office:
Bright Street
Oldham
OL8 4AB

t: 0845 373 2450
f: 0845 373 2451
info@plumcom.co.uk
www.plumcom.co.uk

To request an email version of this newsletter please email subscribe@plumcom.co.uk

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Plum Communications Ltd