

Wiltshire County Council

GOVERNMENT

Wiltshire County Council's IT department coordinates a wealth of information, much of which is highly sensitive. The council uses Sophos Anti-Virus to protect its data both in its main offices in County Halls and in the wider community, including all Wiltshire's schools and libraries.



Business challenge

Wiltshire County Council works in partnership with district, town and parish councils, the health authority and the police to support a population of approximately 440,000. It provides education, transport, environmental services and social services across the county's 1,347 square miles (apart from in Swindon which has its own Borough Council).

The Council recognises that it is ultimately answerable to the public, and is committed to safeguarding its investment of money, time and resources.

Wiltshire County Council's work covers a wide range of activities. 12,000 full- and part-time staff are employed in schools, the health service, transport, libraries, museums and so on.

Key facts

Organisation

Wiltshire County Council

Location

Trowbridge, UK

Employees

12,000

Servers

35 NetWare
25 Windows NT4
1 Windows 2000
4 AIX RS6000
2 Sun Solaris

Desktops

1350 Windows 95
80 Windows NT
DOS/Windows 3.x

Solution

Sophos Anti-Virus

"Our use of taxpayers' money is open to constant public scrutiny. We chose Sophos Anti-Virus to safeguard our data because it offers cost-effective protection with maximum functionality."

*Chris Tinsley, Security Officer,
Wiltshire County Council*

Technology solution

The Council's IT activity was originally based on mainframes and dumb terminals. As it upgraded to a more PC-based operation, it decided to evaluate anti-virus software. Sophos Anti-Virus was chosen in 1994. It was evaluated against Dr Solomon's over a number of months and was found to deliver more functionality while costing less.

Sophos Anti-Virus is used to protect all Wiltshire County Council's PCs, both standalone and networked. In August 2000 this protection was upgraded to include the email gateway as well. Sophos Anti-Virus's protection also extends beyond the Council's immediate buildings. It is used on the many laptops which are taken out, for instance, by social workers on visits and by solicitors who use them in court.

The council runs a variety of software. It has nearly 70 servers, most of which run NetWare or Windows NT but several support UNIX. There are approximately 1500 PCs ranging from low specification 486s to high specification Pentium IIIs. Almost all the workstations support Windows 95 but some support Windows NT.

Security manager Chris Christensen and security officer Chris Tinsley have introduced a formal security structure, bringing significant rigour to the Wiltshire CC's IT procedures. The Council's use of Sophos Anti-Virus is just one example of its commitment to providing sound data security measures in a formal structure. Wiltshire CC is planning to be the first government organisation to meet the requirements of the BS7799 standard which covers the management and control of information technology.



The nature of the Council's work makes it very vulnerable to viruses. In constant communication with the public and its external officers, it has received many viruses by email – all of them stopped at source by Sophos Anti-Virus.

In addition, the Council has many floppy disks dating back some years that still contain the boot sector virus, Form, which was first seen in the wild in 1990. Chris Tinsley says "From time to time the data on these disks is accessed. Obviously, if a disk contains Form, it is detected immediately by Sophos Anti-Virus so in that sense it is not a problem. We are, however, enforcing disk authorisation on all disks, checking them for viruses. Gradually we are eradicating these old viruses for good and, indeed, stopping any new viruses before they can even get near the rest of our systems – including Kournikova which we were sent several times on the day it broke."

Business results

All of these measures mean that the Council is able to exercise significant control over its entire network. Its concern to protect the community beyond County Hall has led it also to place Sophos Anti-Virus on all public access machines in Wiltshire's libraries and it has recently taken out an education licence with Sophos.

The special Sophos education licence allows an unlimited number of PCs at secondary schools throughout Wiltshire to be protected with Sophos Anti-Virus. This option was particularly appealing because it has made deploying Sophos Anti-Virus in the schools a very simple administrative process, since the number of computers on which it is installed does not have to be recorded and monitored.

Chris Tinsley praises the flexibility of Sophos Anti-Virus in protecting machines both within and outside County Hall. "Not only is it easy to use," he says, "but it is also easy to install and update across our entire network, on our laptops and in the public arena."

To find out how Sophos products can help protect your organisation, visit www.sophos.com/products