



CASE STUDY

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Cuts Costs by Switching to SafeNet Authentication Service

With local government in the UK under the most severe financial pressures in living memory, yet at the same time needing to improve the services it provides to local taxpayers, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council found that switching to Gemalto's SafeNet Authentication Service lowers costs and demand on support staff by up to 30 percent.

The Organization

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council is the governing body for the Dudley Metropolitan Borough in the West Midlands region of the United Kingdom. The Council represents more than 300,000 citizens and provides services such as roads and infrastructure, housing, schools, waste and recycling, libraries, social care, and community events.

The Business Need

Local government in the UK is facing a perfect storm of spending cuts and pressure to improve the delivery of services. Remote working by council employees can help to deal with both of these imperatives, but providing a reliable security solution for remote access to council networks is in itself a significant expense, both in terms of the equipment needed and the staff time required to manage it. Dudley MBC's networks team was providing remote access for over a thousand users, but wanted to increase that number still further, enabling savings on office space and helping improve service quality. Its remote access infrastructure, though, was relatively costly and demanded a high degree of attention from technical staff.

Challenge

Dudley MBC is under pressure from its constituents to protect sensitive information while also cutting costs, but its existing RSA solution was expensive and cumbersome to manage.

Solution

Cloud-based SafeNet Authentication Service offers flexible licensing and pricing, so there are no upfront expenses, and the migration tool enables companies to manage both previous solutions and Gemalto tokens with one management console while easily moving users to Gemalto tokens.

Benefit

By switching to SafeNet Authentication Service, Dudley MBC not only implemented a leading remote access solution, but managed to cut costs and demand on support staff by up to 30 percent.

The Solution

Gemalto, along with its reseller partner Cision, agreed with Dudley to replace all of the council's 1150 remote access tokens, which had been supplied by rival firm RSA, with SafeNet Authentication Service tokens. Unlike the previous solution, the SafeNet Authentication Service tokens are sold on a perpetual licensing model. The agreement called for the replacement to be carried out over a three year period. In fact, though, the migration process was completed in one year.

SafeNet Authentication Service delivers fully-automated, highly secure and strong authentication with flexible token options that are tailored to the unique needs of each organization, substantially reducing the total cost of operation. With no infrastructure required, the service enables a quick migration to a multi-tier and multi-tenant cloud environment, and protects cloud-based and on-premises applications and data as well as corporate networks, identities and devices.

The Benefits

Cost-Effective from Day One

Adrian Turner, Dudley MBC's network unit manager, says that SafeNet Authentication Service's licensing model made the migration cost-effective from day one. "The great benefit was that there was no upfront cost for us," he explains. "Whenever one of our old tokens expired, we bought a new one from SafeNet Authentication Service. And the licensing model means that, every time we replace a token, we're saving money." Dudley's total IT user base incorporates around 5,000 desktops and 1,200 laptops. For a number of years, Turner says, the council has been trying to increase the mobility of its workforce, so five years ago, it partnered with a remote access provider to roll out a token-based system that would improve the security of its systems, as well as promoting home working. This system worked well, but Turner explains that he came to realize that a switch to SafeNet Authentication Service could improve functionality, as well as reducing the cost of operating the remote access infrastructure.

Lower TCO

"Our infrastructure was ageing, and required investment," he says. "We had 1,000 key fobs, and it was a monthly chore to replace them. Additionally, with SafeNet Authentication Service's licensing model, the tokens don't expire after three years, leading to a significantly lower total cost of ownership. "SafeNet Authentication Service helped us build the infrastructure to support the migration," Turner explains. "It was very simple, and, with one engineer's help, we completed the job in half a day. We've had the odd teething problem, as you'd expect, but essentially it has been a very smooth process. We haven't had much need to call on further support – we've basically been able to handle it all internally." For a council like Dudley, cost is king – Turner says that the council is trying to cut £70 million from its budget over the next few years. "Every penny counts," he says. Increased mobile working allows the authority to look at rationalizing the office space it needs to provide, so the cost savings from the switch could potentially be much bigger over time.

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Less Demands on Support Staff

But that isn't the end of the savings. The ease of use of the SafeNet Authentication Service tokens, by comparison with the previous system, means that Turner's team of engineers isn't needed to take as many support calls. "Our previous system was managed by my team," he explains. "We had network admins and technical engineers doing simple tasks like resetting PINs, because the front end was difficult for users to manage. With SafeNet Authentication Service, the front end is all web-based and intuitive, so we have passed that task over to our first line support desk, and we're getting very few calls to second line support. It's better for users too – for them, being dealt with by the support desk is quicker and better than having the job allocated to an engineer and having to wait for a response."

This has, Turner estimates, resulted in a 25-30 percent saving on support costs. When combined with the ten per cent Dudley is saving on key fob purchases, it's no surprise that he, and his bosses, are happy with the switch to SafeNet Authentication Service. Now, the council is looking at further development of its remote access offering with SafeNet Authentication Service, including self-service options. In the present financial environment faced by local government, the sheer fact that Dudley is considering more developments is a real testimony to the success of SafeNet Authentication Service's technology and business model.

"We estimate we've saved 25-30 percent in support costs from implementing SafeNet Authentication Service. Increased mobile working allows the authority to look at rationalising the office space it needs to provide, so the cost savings from the switch could potentially be much bigger over time. The greatest benefit was that there was no upfront cost for us. Whenever one of our old tokens expired, we bought a new one from Gemalto. And the licensing model means that, every time we replace a token, we're saving money."

-Adrian Turner, Network Unit Manager, Dudley MBC


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