

# CASE STUDY

## Security Lights the Way - Electrosonic

### The Client

Security threats facing IT managers are gaining in number on a daily basis and many are now facing a quandary over how best to tackle the problems. Deciding to bring in a third party to deal with these types of issues is often a difficult decision to make. Factors such as maintaining overall network control, whilst achieving optimum efficiency and overall security are those that have to be addressed.

These were the exact issues faced by Kent company, Electrosonic's, IT manager Rob Snelling in 2001. As a multinational organisation, with offices around the world, Electrosonic is a leading supplier of audio visual control systems. With a client list including high profile names such as Universal Studios, Florida, Guinness in Dublin and Thinktank, the new Museum of Science and Discovery at Millennium Point in Birmingham - a professional approach to working practices was essential.

Faced with providing secure communications for his colleagues, whether in the office or overseas, Snelling began researching what was available to him. He had three main criteria to consider:

- 1) secure the company
- 2) remain within the budget
- 3) remain in control

As Snelling explains, "Electrosonic is renowned for providing a high quality service. With this pedigree inherent in Electrosonic's ethos, securing its IT system was also paramount to my role as IT manager. Although security was within my career background, I wanted to ensure that the methods in place were those that would be securing Electrosonic's system in the best possible manner, whilst maintaining overall control for my network. Like many businesses, our security was predominately dealt with by an outside IT company, backed up by the internal processes I carried out on a regular basis, such as updating patches onto the system from the Web."

Extensive research by Snelling into the services IT security consultants provided, led him to another Kent based business, independent IT security expert MIS Corporate Defence Solutions. MIS offers clients solutions that are individually tailored via a range of services, combining technology with consultancy, implementation, support and management. Electrosonic's decision to look for expert help was mainly due to concerns over how to set-up a successful IT security practice, whilst at the same time running busy internal IT resources.

Snelling still wanted to feel in control of what was happening to the IT system, so was looking for a bespoke solution that retained his autonomy. Another issue that needed consideration, was that although Electrosonic did receive a fairly adequate level of security, the costs were extremely high. The top priority obviously regarded the level of service and security, however lowering costs was also pretty high on the agenda.

Outsourcing IT security for Snelling was therefore a logical process to ensure that his priorities were met. Companies that offer outsourced IT security services have access to specialist knowledge and constantly monitor the industry to discover security trends and threats. These companies are quick to identify potential problems and are proactive, rather than reactive, in administering the technology to deal with the situation. As a cost effective answer to IT security issues, outsourcing has been shown to cost up to 96% less, compared to hiring a single dedicated IT specialist into an organisation.

"From my initial pre-sales contact, one of MIS' key account managers was on site within 2 days to discuss the options. One of my key objectives was to gauge exactly what was needed via some sort of audit - something MIS insists on prior to any work being implemented," explained Snelling.

MIS's answer was to introduce Electrosonic to MISEssence, a range of technical support and maintenance services. This service has been developed to ensure customers receive a high level of technical support, according to the specific needs of each individual customer. By offering varying levels of support, each individual customer is paying only for what they really need.

One of the main services needing attention was the firewall provision. As one of the most efficient ways in which to protect a network, a firewall acts as a barrier that filters traffic between a network and the Internet, hence enabling it to block any unauthorised or dubious traffic. Implementing a firewall solution meant that Electrosonic could safely increase its connectivity to the Internet and deploy remote access to emails while ensuring that its network was safe from unwanted visitors.

“During installation I was fully trained on the solutions put in, so that I could manage them myself and retain autonomy. With the MIS support team just a phone call away, any queries that arose in the early days were soon ironed out. Remote access was also improved via a VPN service for Electrosonic employees remotely logging-in from around the world. Prior to this the bills had been high and the service sub-standard for those trying to log in to collect email during the day.”

MIS is an expert in offering managed IT security solutions and was able to allay Snelling's concerns about losing control of his network. The solution works together in partnership with the existing solutions - which married together, ensure optimum security. For this purpose a bespoke contract was agreed between the two parties, formalising the way in which security problems are reported and how and when security upgrades should take place.

Snelling concluded; “The level of reporting, communication and consultancy we have received from MIS has been of the highest standard through out. We've been provided with a service specifically for us and without the usual hard sell for products we really didn't need. Although I had some previous IT security knowledge, the levels provided by MIS have re-assured me that all is in safe hands.”



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