



The Oxford Knowledge Company rehabilitates IT systems for Oxfordshire Drug and Alcohol Abuse Team (DAAT)

Preventing today's young people from becoming the drug users of tomorrow

In 2003, pioneering substance abuse group, Oxfordshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) moved, from its outdated and disparate IT systems, to streamline its operations and enable its teams to work collaboratively on sensitive data in a protected environment.

Today, those core IT systems are in the expert hands of Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, The Oxford Knowledge Company, says DAAT Data Manager, Steve Pirrie.

Late in 2002, however, when DAAT moved to central Oxford from the county outskirts, the story was quite a different one. Its IT systems were in urgent need of rehabilitation to protect confidential client data, increase the productivity of DAAT staff and 'future proof' its IT infrastructure to support the organisation in its rapid expansion.

From slow and cumbersome to fast and secure systems

DAAT was relying on POP3 email delivery to individual PCs and the necessary sharing and forwarding of emails often resulted in an unwelcome influx of email viruses.

Pirrie comments:

"Prior to the appointment of The Oxford Knowledge Company in 2003, up to 10 DAAT staff were sharing a dial-up 56kb Internet connection at any one time. Consequently, sourcing vital research information from the internet was slow and cumbersome and really drained staff productivity."

"Systems security is vital as we're legislated to comply with all elements of the Data Protection Act (DPA) for the management and retention of client information."

"Equally, while our client data is attributable – which is why security is of paramount importance – the information we provide to other agencies is strictly controlled, 'anonymised' and aggregated. However, unauthorised access to our systems would significantly raise the risk level of any data becoming identifiable."

About Oxfordshire DAAT

Oxfordshire DAAT is one of 149 DAATs throughout England whose role is to implement and co-ordinate the Government's National Drug Strategy.

Alongside the five District Council Areas and the Oxfordshire Police Basic Command Unit, DAAT aims to prevent the people of today becoming the drug users of tomorrow by limiting the availability and sale of illegal drugs which in turn, reduces drug-related crime.

"THE OXFORD KNOWLEDGE COMPANY'S EXCEPTIONAL DAY-TO-DAY IT SUPPORT, ONGOING DILIGENCE AND PROACTIVE ADVICE IS, IN MY EXPERIENCE, RARE. I SHALL CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND THE COMPANY'S UNRIVALLED IT EXPERTISE AND CUSTOMER CARE."

Steve Pirrie
Data Manager
Oxfordshire DAAT

Regaining Core Control

Historically, unwelcome viruses had entered DAAT's network by 'piggy backing' email attachments. By implementing Symantec AntiVirus protection, The Oxford Knowledge Company was able to protect data stored on the server. Additionally, each inbox is protected with Symantec Mail Security which scans all emails coming into DAAT's network and quarantines any potential viruses.

So how were these security issues addressed? The Oxford Knowledge Company Senior Technical Consultant Matt Banks explains:

"A review of the entire system revealed a slow and outdated infrastructure, which prevented DAAT employees from maximising their potential and best serving their users. We reinstated the company with control of its core systems by switching DAAT to a high-speed broadband connection; moving it to a direct, rather than a POP3 email delivery system; and implementing Microsoft Exchange 2003 – while migrating the server infrastructure to Windows 2003 Small Business Server (SBS) from SBS 2000.

Banks continues: "Staff can now access the internet with ease, while the centralised storage and back up of resources such as calendar and meeting room allocation can be accessed across the group and managed centrally by just one person. It's made collaborative working across the group much smoother and quicker. And of course, these savings are passed directly onto DAAT's service users who receive a more efficient and comprehensive service."

Exceptional approach

During 2005, to reduce operational overheads, Oxfordshire DAAT embarked upon sharing its office space with a health service provider. And, although the two organisations remained distinct and separate, sharing some of the same physical IT network, whilst maintaining security, had healthy cost implications.

Pirrie says: "The Oxford Knowledge Company helmed the implementation of the shared IT systems from basic electrical point planning to systems configuration and implementation."

"Our infrastructure expanded from 10 to 25 PCs – all geared for collaborative working spanning Internet, email and Microsoft applications. And significantly, the disruption to our operation was minimal allowing our staff to continue to support our clients with no noticeable difference."

Pirrie points to the knowledge and expertise that sets The Oxford Knowledge Company apart from its peers:

"Firstly, they don't baffle staff with IT jargon; and overall, their exceptional day-to-day IT support, ongoing diligence and proactive advice is, in my experience, rare. This, combined with stringent monthly health-checks of our servers and network components, means that DAAT has peace of mind to focus on what matters most – the provision of treatment services to a vulnerable client group."

Solution scope

- Web Domain Management
- Windows Domain Migration
- Microsoft Small Business Server 2003
- Microsoft Exchange Server 2003
- Symantec AntiVirus Enterprise Edition
- Symantec AntiVirus Mail Security

"WITH A MORE RELIABLE SYSTEM IN PLACE, THERE WERE FEWER INTERRUPTIONS IN CRITICAL NETWORK COMPONENTS. THIS HAS REVOLUTIONISED PRODUCTIVITY AND CUT UNNECESSARY COSTS."

Steve Pirrie
Data Manager
Oxfordshire DAAT

For more information please visit:
www.oxfordshiredaat.org
www.oxford-knowledge.com



The Oxford Knowledge Company Limited,
Woodside, Hinksey Hill, Oxford OX1 5BE, UK
Telephone : 01865 322100 • 08456 444066