

WGSN Case Study

Clearview Systems designs a secure remote working solution for WGSN's mobile workforce.

Remote Working—The fashionable choice for WGSN

SonicWALL Aventail E-Class SSL VPN solution delivers improved online service and flexibility to style industry bible.

Overview

Launched in 1998 by co-founders Julian and Marc Worth, the WorthGlobal StyleNetwork (WGSN) is a global provider of online research, trend analysis and news to the fashion, design and style industries. Called "indispensable" by The Times and "The fashion business' secret weapon" by The Wall Street Journal, WGSN is fast becoming a major source of industry intelligence.

The company's culture supports a significant degree of remote and mobile working, and WGSN had a requirement for a technology solution that could guarantee ubiquitous and secure network access to WGSN staff, partners and customers.

As a result of implementing SonicWALL Aventail's E-Class SSL VPN solution, WGSN staff are now able to access the company's IT resources safely and reliably via laptops, mobile phones, home PCs and Internet kiosks.



“ *IT demonstrated that the SSL VPN solution provides fast ROI and TCO—allowing users to access internal resources via Internet kiosks. This capability reduced cost by eliminating some of the need for laptops. The solution's mobile support for internal servers also gave us fine grain rule sets and multiple authentication, allowing WGSN to control access by authenticating internal employees and external contractors. We also found the solution to be easy-to-use, helping us to meet our business needs and enabling our internal users to simply fire up a browser and access their files and applications.”*
—Phil Waller
Infosecurity Officer
WGSN

The Business Need

WGSN provides fashion and style industry market intelligence to thousands of businesses, individuals and universities from two geographically dispersed data centres, each of which requires 24x7 uptime. The company has grown organically and this is reflected in the way its IT team operates. As a dynamic group providing myriad services to both external and internal clients, WGSN IT managers have a requirement for remote access technologies that are easy to use and configure. The company's previous remote working solution, firewall access via IPSec and PPTP, required client installations on each laptop and hours of tedious administering and configuring by IT staff.

Phil Waller, Infosecurity officer at WGSN, commented: "We had many laptops coming back into IT to be rebuilt due to erroneous installation files corrupting the laptops configuration or locking up the systems."

This meant that business consistency was very poor as users had limited or inconsistent browser access – poison for any Web-based business.

"As an online service with a range of different users, including employees and contractors, we needed a solution that would enable staff to share and access files securely. Our users also needed consistent and fast Web access so that they could provide an efficient service to WGSN end customers, whose expectations of the online experience are very high," Phil added.

In recognising the vital need for a more advanced solution, WGSN began evaluating alternative network security vendors including Juniper® and Watchguard®.



The Organisation

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The Challenge

WGSN needed a secure remote access solution that would enable employees and contractors to share and access files securely. Their users also needed consistent and fast Web access so that they could provide an efficient service to WGSN end customers, whose expectations of the online experience are very high.

The SonicWall Solution

SonicWALL Aventail E-Class SSL VPN EX-1600 HA pair 50 users with SonicWALL Aventail Workplace, Connect Tunnel, Connect Mobile and NAM.

The Results

- WGSN staffs are now able to access the company's IT resources safely and reliably via laptops, mobile phones, home PCs and Internet kiosks.
- A solution that is both efficient and simple to use, enabling secure universal access to a wide range of applications.
- No more problems with tedious IPSec VPN laptops configurations maintenance.
- Company's critical applications are accessible in the event of an emergency.

Aventail Overview

- Provides secure remote access to any TCP/IP based application via a web browser. Users can access any application from any location without installing any software onto the workstation / device.
- Allocates granular access permissions to be granted based on login credentials, the device that is connecting, and the presence or absence of specific types of software on the device.
- Administrators can easily create access policies that match the organisation's security policy.
- Files viewed during user sessions may be encrypted and then destroyed when the connection is terminated to protect confidential information..

Clearview Systems are one of the UK's leading internet security integrators. Our client base of over 250 companies comprises government organisations, blue chip corporates and medium sized companies. We install and provide ongoing support for solutions which allow our customers to harness the full benefits of productivity and cost reduction that the Internet has to offer without compromising their internal security.

Sonicwall is a recognised global leader in the IT Security market and its solutions are deployed in distributed enterprise environments, government, retail, point-of-sale and healthcare segments as well as through service providers.

The Solution

After an exhaustive two-year evaluation process, WGSN selected SonicWALL Aventail's E-Class SSL VPN solution over numerous competing options.

Phil Waller explained: "WGSN looked at a number of competitors but found that SonicWALL Aventail's solution provided unlimited, secure Web access from home, Internet kiosks and mobile phones, which we saw as a way to improve WGSN's business continuity and disaster recovery planning". WGSN is using Windows Mobile PDAs for IT support calls, using the SonicWALL Aventail Connect Mobile client and the NAM module, which enable them to RDP into their bastion hosts, providing rapid response whilst on the road.

To provide a fair assessment of advantages and disadvantages, WGSN undertook a pilot rollout with key employees who expressed the belief that WGSN would benefit from reliable and secure remote working capability.

"IT demonstrated that the SSL VPN solution provides fast ROI and reduced cost of ownership—allowing users to access internal resources via Internet kiosks. This capability reduced cost by eliminating some of the need for laptops. The solution's mobile support for internal servers also gave us fine grain rule sets and multiple authentication, allowing WGSN to control access by authenticating internal employees and external contractors."

Phil added, "We also found the solution to be easy-to-use, helping us to meet our business needs and enabling our internal users to simply fire up a browser and access their files and applications."

The Solution

SonicWALL Aventail's E-Class SSL VPN solution has provided WGSN staff and partners with simple and secure access to a variety of resources and applications from home PCs, laptops, Internet kiosks and mobile phones. These include Web-based applications; Web-based e-mail, CIFS (a file sharing component) and RDP (terminal services for remote administration). WGSN can now strategically define individual user access rights, dependent on the actual internal resources that each user requires. SonicWALL Aventail uses a local database and AD authentication method, which is not offered by a number of other mobile network security vendors. This means that all file-sharing resources and proprietary applications can be made secure, even when being accessed by a vast number of users and user types. This capability has also allowed them to establish different security groups and NT authentication."

Phil Waller concluded: "The fact that business resources can be accessed anywhere will not only have a positive impact on capex but also on our ability to recover quickly from any Internet or network outages, better ensuring business continuity. We are able to provide remote access to our employees for e-mail, via OWA,[®] Peoplesoft,[®] File sharing via UNC paths and also most importantly our CRM systems" "I think that the usage of the SonicWALL Aventail E-Class SSL VPN capability will increase exponentially. We are currently rolling out the smart tunnel access to users with corporate laptops, which features fine grained control, enabling us to better protect our internal assets."



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SonicWALL Aventail Benefits

- **Detect:** SonicWALL Aventail End Point Control detects the identity and security state of the end device
- **Protect:** SonicWALL Aventail Unified Policy limits user access to authorized applications only
- **Connect:** SonicWALL Aventail Smart Access and Smart
- Tunneling ensures easy, secure access to all network resources

The SonicWall Advantage[®]

Organisations are now having to accommodate a rapid growth in demand for access into their company's IT systems via the internet and wireless networks. Demand is growing in terms of the numbers of users requiring remote access, the number of different devices from which access is requested (PDA's Smartphones) and also the number of different locations from which access is required (hotels, motorway services, client premises). Technical restrictions prevent traditional IPSEC VPN technology from providing a solution to these demands.

In addition, companies are increasingly turning to the internet to enable them to communicate with business partners, customers and suppliers via extranet systems.

Meeting these new access needs requires a new approach to network access control, allowing users to access the applications that they need to do their jobs whilst protecting the organisation against rogue access, keyloggers and other Trojan applications.

Aventail's[®] SSL VPN appliances are unique in their ability to automatically interrogate the device connecting to the network and provide granular access rights in accordance with the users identity, the type of device that they are connecting from, and the presence of any malicious code on the device itself. The administrator can grant the appropriate access rights to provision secure access anywhere, any time, without the need to install software onto the remote device.