



## Locking down the Wyre with DeviceWall



### BUSINESS DRIVER

Improved internal security, stop both incoming and outbound threats.

### INDUSTRY SECTOR

Public, local government.

### WHY DEVICEWALL?

Easy to deploy, excellent reports and analytics, effective policy control.

### BUSINESS BENEFITS

Improved network security and protection of confidential information.

The Borough of Wyre is in North-West Lancashire, nestled between the Fylde Coast in the West and the wilds of the Forest of Bowland in the East. Serving a community approximately 109,000 residents and local businesses from its base in Poulton-Le-Fylde, the council's 550 staff are mainly based at the Civic Centre and satellite offices, while some staff and Councillors working from home.

### The challenge: the threat from devices

The IT team at Wyre Borough Council was well aware of the threats posed by removable devices to network systems, such as the theft, loss and corruption of data. However, the increasing popularity of these devices and their affordability meant that the risk from devices ranging from USB sticks and CDs to iPods and digital cameras was significant.

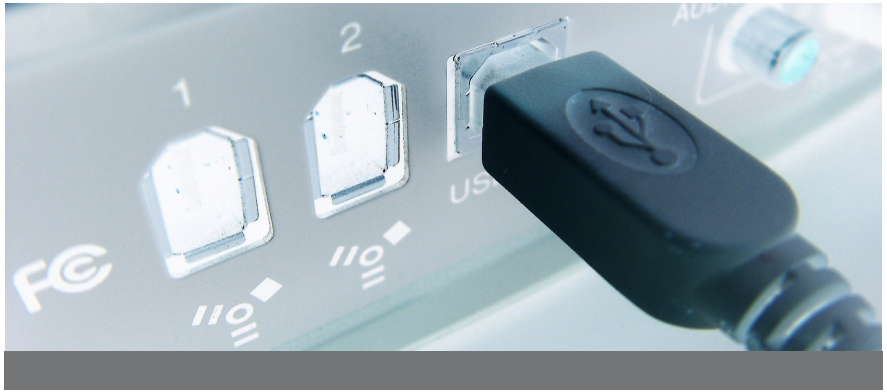
When a virus was spread through the use of a personal digital camera, the team decided it was time to take action to strengthen their network defenses. The virus occurred when a photograph on an employee's camera became corrupted on a home computer. The virus then spread to the network when the camera was later plugged in to a council PC. As a result, the council's email system – integral to day-to-day management and citizen liaison – was down for two days.

"We were seriously inconvenienced when the virus spread onto our network," explained Richard Thomas, Audit and Corporate Risk Manager at Wyre Borough Council. "But we also had identified other threats posed by removable devices from a recent risk assessment. Stealing confidential data or corrupting files on the council network could be as easy as plugging a USB stick into the computer."

"We wanted to get an appreciation of the number of devices being used and the threats they posed, to help us formulate plans to mitigate these risks," he added. "We needed to ensure that, in future, we could be proactive rather than reactive – so that we could control and monitor the use of removable devices."

### The solution: introducing network control

The council evaluated various tools that would help the IT team get a handle on what was happening on the network and who was plugging in what kind of devices. The IT Manager, Dave Conn took up the offer of a free 30-day trial of Centennial DeviceWall and, in September 2006, conducted an initial audit of the network.



The DeviceWall evaluation software showed that – as well as the expected number of USB drives and digital cameras – iPods, MP3 Players and even non-corporate Blackberrys and PDAs were being plugged into the network regularly. The potential for data loss, theft and corruption was greater than they had expected.

With the help of Centennial Platinum partner, Pillar Solutions, the IT team deployed DeviceWall across the organization, and for the first month used it to monitor network connections. Using the inbuilt reporting facility in DeviceWall, the IT team could see exactly who was doing what, before deciding how to manage access to the network.

The IT manager decided that the best course of action for Wyre Borough Council was to lock out all devices and allow them back onto the Network on a 'case by case' basis, with permission being granted if a genuine business case existed. Staff were informed in advance of the imposition of the new software and the change in procedure regarding use of USB type devices with memory capability.

"We did see a little resistance to having to ask permission to use USB sticks and cameras. However, as our staff were aware of the reasons why their device had been barred they were happy to complete the necessary form and obtain their managers authorization for use," explained Conn.

DeviceWall showed that USB sticks were being used frequently by staff, so the IT Manager decided that the best way to ensure data on the sticks was always safe was to invest in encrypted USB sticks. The Council issued these to the frequent users, as identified by DeviceWall. Conn commented: "We now know who has a council pen drive and that the data on them is encrypted. If one gets lost, no one can access the data on it."

### **The benefits: proactive protection for the network**

"Monitoring the use of devices before and after the lock out has confirmed that the vast majority of usage was business related, which is good news. Our risk assessments have to show demonstrable change," explained Thomas. "In this case, the project has had a positive impact on both employee behavior and corporate security. "It shows risk management informing actions that benefit the whole organization."

DeviceWall is now an important part of the Council's layered approach to security. For example, the IT team now uses DeviceWall in conjunction with the firewall to ensure that only authorized devices can connect to the network – and even then only after being scanned for viruses and other threats.

DeviceWall continues to monitor network traffic, enabling the IT team to see what people are plugging in. "We've actually spotted a few people attempting to plug in their own devices on numerous occasions, without requesting the necessary permission," said Conn. "I suppose they're hoping we will forget, or not notice what's going on. But even if we do forget, DeviceWall doesn't! By just giving staff a quick call to alert them to what they've done, we can nip the problem in the bud. This has already had a positive effect on working practices."

"DeviceWall has enabled our IT team to be proactive, not reactive, in resolving the risks associated with removable devices," he concluded.



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