



Winchester City Council

Profile

- Provides public services to 110000 citizens.
- Covers Winchester city and neighbouring area.

Users

- Two main office sites within the town.
- Tens of applications for resident services.

Challenges

- Simplify access to services administration.
- Comply with CoCo ahead of schedule.
- Secure access to data and applications.

Results

- Council staff access data quickly and easily.
- Help-desk load reduced.
- Helped achieve CoCo compliance.

City council ensures CoCo compliance and simplifies IT access.

Meeting GSi security standards

Winchester City Council provides a range of services including housing, council tax, benefits environmental, and business services to its residents. With access to a large amount of confidential citizen and government data, the Council places great emphasis on data security

Following the introduction of the Government's GSi Code of Connection (CoCo) policy, which lists the security standards that organisations must meet in order to connect and remain connected to the Government Secure Intranet (GSi) in early 2009, the Council wanted to ensure it was compliant with CoCo requirements ahead of the policy deadline.

To develop the necessary trust and confidence within the public sector communities and between Government and the citizens, a common approach to risk management and the implementation of an information assurance framework became increasingly important. The aim of the Code of Connection (CoCo) is to develop the trust required both within and between communities, which then allows more effective use of shared systems and services. CoCo provides a set of security standards that organisations must adhere to when joining the GSi.

With its staff needing access to multiple applications per day, Winchester City Council saw that having to remember and manage complex passwords for each application was placing a burden on its staff and IT support team.

The Council therefore decided to look for a cost-effective, flexible and easy-to-use solution which would simplify the login process for staff, reducing the problem of forgotten passwords, whilst increasing security.

Enterprise SSO increases security and cuts support calls

Winchester City Council opted for Enterprise SSO, a single sign-on software solution from leader in identity and access management Evidian, to increase login security, improve staff efficiency and cut IT support calls.

The Evidian Enterprise SSO solution, which is being used together with two-factor authentication to secure systems and application access, was implemented as it met the Council's key requirements for security and flexibility, a core part of the Council's compliance with the GSi CoCo.

The solution enables authorised staff to log in to multiple applications with a single user ID and password instead of having to log in to each application individually.

Using Evidian Enterprise SSO within the Council

Council staff use the Evidian solution when signing into a range of back-office and citizen data applications. Evidian Enterprise SSO enforces security policies by clearly linking application access to user identities, and by enforcing the use of strong, complex passwords.

Evidian Enterprise SSO secures access to all types of corporate application – whether Windows, Citrix, Linux, Unix, web-based or mainframe. It combines multi-factor authentication with a plug-and-play SSO solution, replacing user passwords with digital signatures based on certificates, smart cards, USB keys, or biometrics. Access is authorised according to existing security policies and enterprise directories.

Evidian Enterprise SSO also encourages a greater level of compliance as it creates a central audit trail; this helps minimise potential security breaches. The solution records all user access activities and thus enables further immediate analysis if needed.

The Evidian solution delivers security where it is most often needed, for user identification and authentication when accessing key applications. This is now a key requirement for security compliance, especially in the public sector under the CoCo policy.

Productivity and security

Key benefits of Evidian Enterprise SSO are it simplifies access to applications, which improves productivity for staff as it eliminates the need to juggle and remember several passwords – which is often time consuming, improves working practice. In turn, this helps public sector organisations to comply with government requirements whilst improving security. The solution simplifies access for both office-based and remote users, and makes single sign on easy to deploy and manage.

Evidian Enterprise SSO's ability to quickly and securely switch between users on shared computers means staff can swiftly log in with a single user ID and password instead of having to switch back and forth logging into multiple applications. This no-nonsense approach to accessing applications is not only more efficient but more importantly, also more secure.

An additional benefit of the solution is its unique offline self-service password reset function, which lets staff reset passwords themselves by going through a series of pre-set security questions. As well as encouraging employees to use the full range of applications available to them it eliminates a significant number of password reset calls coming through to the IT helpdesk. This helps cut costs as the IT department can focus their time and resources elsewhere.

The Council is now confident it has the solution to help it maintain compliance with the Government's GSi Code of Connection policy.

« Evidian's SSO solution exceeds the CoCo requirements for password strength, and saves users' time...It gives us a single, consistent security policy that is easy to apply, with minimal support overhead. »

« We wanted to ensure we were compliant with CoCo ahead of the Government's original deadline. Evidian's SSO solution exceeds the CoCo requirements for password strength, and saves users' time by negating the need to sign in to multiple applications. It also cuts the number of helpdesk calls from users for resets of forgotten passwords. It gives us a single, consistent security policy that's easy to apply, with minimal support overhead. »

Sheila Davidge,
Head of IM&T,
Winchester City Council.

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