



Customer Story

Central Government Industry

The British Library Makes the UK's Digital Heritage Accessible with Ericom's AccessNow



“The British Library has to find a balance between providing the best services for users, while protecting the interests of publishers and meeting the requirements of legislation. Ericom's AccessNow enables us to do precisely this.”

Lewis Crawford
Manager, Architecture Group
The British Library



Hundreds of thousands of e-journal articles, e-books, blogs and other digital materials are published every year in the UK, along with around 4.8 million web sites. Following recent legislation, the British Library is required to not only store these significant cultural and intellectual resources, but also provide highly secure and strictly controlled access to them.

Ericom technology is being used to help The British Library — and five other libraries across the UK and Ireland — meet this legal obligation. Researchers, students and other readers (a person who registers to use the libraries store digital collections) working within designated reading rooms use Ericom's AccessNow solution to view digital deposits quickly, easily and securely from any device.

CUSTOMER

The British Library

INDUSTRY

Central Government

PRODUCT

Ericom® AccessNow™

CHALLENGES

- Permit users to access digital materials, under strictly controlled circumstances
- Prevent users from downloading and copying digital content
- Provide a single access solution for use by six libraries across the UK and Ireland

SOLUTION

- Deploy Ericom's AccessNow in a shared, virtualised IT environment
- Eliminate the need to download software onto each individual user device

BENEFITS

- Allows students, researchers and other library users to access digital resources easily
- Opens digital resources quickly, in the correct application needed to view them
- Blocks unauthorised access
- Ensures tight security, preventing illegal downloads and copying
- Delivers a single access solution for six libraries

“It only takes two to three seconds for a user to open a file”

When the British Library needed to respond to new legislation, its challenges initially seemed very complicated. With Ericom, it found a simple solution.

NEW UK LEGISLATION

For over 300 years, the British Library has acquired a copy of every book and article published in the UK and Ireland. It houses over 150 million books and other items, ranging from the Magna Carta of 1215 to manuscripts of The Beatles' songs on 625km of shelving. Through its unique and immense collection, it aims to preserve the culture, heritage and intellectual property of the nation.

Today, however, books and articles are not only printed in hard copy; many are produced in digital formats, and are no less significant to the country's history. This growth in digital media precipitated a change in legislation and, on 6th April 2013, new regulations came into force requiring publishers to give the British Library copies of digital materials. In the first twelve months alone, the institution expected to receive over 100,000 digital articles and e-books, and capture 4.8 million web sites, as a direct consequence of this legislation.

The library already had an established IT infrastructure for storing electronic materials and a web-based resource discovery system (Explore the British Library) for searching for and finding digital resources. However, under the terms of the legislation, it had to apply very strict restrictions on the use of newly acquired digital deposits, and it didn't have a suitable means of providing this access control.

“The legislation for digital media reflects the 300-year old legislation

for printed media,” explains Mike Euesden, project manager for the Legal Deposit Libraries Access Project at the British Library. “We only hold one physical copy of each book, enabling one person to read it at a time. Consequently, the legislation stipulates that we can only allow one person to look at each digital resource in any library at any one time.”

A HOST OF TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

The new legislation created a number of technical challenges for the IT team at the British Library. First and foremost, the team had to find a way to control access to digital items received through legal deposit. This access solution had to be able to restrict access to users physically within the British Library, and only permit one person to access each resource at a time. In addition, the access solution had to prevent readers from copying and downloading the media, while permitting them to print small sections for personal study.

“We were also concerned that text files created by Citrix software on end user devices might hold session data and therefore pose a security risk.”

Lewis Crawford
Manager, Architecture Group
The British Library

Another key technical challenge arose from the fact that the digital content was in a wide range of formats. To refer to an electronic

article in PDF format, readers would need a PDF viewer application (possibly in an old version); to check a web site, they would need a web browser to re-render that site; and to read a book, they would need an e-reader. If the library had to provide a multitude of applications on each workstation, there would be obvious complications and added costs.

To deliver a positive user experience, the IT team wanted to make it possible for readers to be able to access digital deposits from within the library's existing resource discovery system, simply by clicking on a link. This objective added to the complexity of the team's solution specification. “Our desire to create a secure wrapper from a web site link eliminated a number of different potential solutions,” recalls Lewis Crawford, manager of The British Library's Architecture Group.

A SHARED IT SOLUTION

The new regulations apply not just to The British Library, but to all six official Legal Deposit Libraries in the UK and Ireland. The other five are: The National Library of Scotland; the National Library of Wales; The Bodleian Libraries of the University of Oxford; Cambridge University Libraries; and Trinity College Library, Dublin. The six institutions decided to work together, under the lead of the British Library, to implement an access solution, based on a shared IT infrastructure.

Initially the British Library put together a proof-of-concept using Citrix technology, but it decided not to proceed with Citrix. Crawford explains: “At the time, Citrix required software to be downloaded onto each individual client device, which would have been complicated. We were also concerned that text files created





by Citrix software on end-user devices might hold session data and therefore pose a security risk."

“Ericom’s AccessNow technology was very cost effective to deploy.”

*Lewis Crawford
Manager, Architecture Group
The British Library*

The British Library was keen to deploy a solution based on a HTML5 client, which is precisely what it found from Ericom. The company’s AccessNow solution is a HTML5 remote desktop gateway that works from any device with a HTML5 compatible browser. End users do not need to download any software to gain secure access to centrally stored applications and data. “In comparison to the quotes provided from Citrix, Ericom’s AccessNow technology was very cost effective to deploy,” Crawford says.

The six Legal Deposit Libraries have a shared technical infrastructure with four nodes, two at the British Library

in London, one at the National Library of Wales and one at the National Library of Scotland. Ericom’s AccessNow technology runs in this shared IT environment, providing access control capabilities to readers across all six libraries (as well as The Faculty of Advocates in Scotland). The shared technical infrastructure is virtualised using VMware technology and runs on HP blades in terminal servers.

FAST, SECURE ACCESS

AccessNow enables the libraries to provide a fast and seamless service for readers. As soon as a user clicks on a resource, the technology identifies his or her location, checks to make sure no-one else is using the same material in the same place, brings up the right viewer application depending on the format of the resource and then authorises access. It automatically blocks two users in the same place from accessing the same resources at the same time, but permits simultaneous use by users located in different libraries. “A lot of things go on in the background,

but it only takes two or three seconds for a user to open a file,” observes Stephen Johnson, a technical architect from the British Library who was closely involved in the project.

Across all six libraries there are more than 1,000 workstations, from a mix of vendors including Dell and HP, running a variety of operating systems. The versatility of AccessNow means that it can run equally well on any device with any operating system and deliver consistent, good performance for users. “The response times have been well received by users,” says Euesden. “They have the convenience of a single click through to digital content without the onus of having to download software.”

“AccessNow enables the Legal Deposit Libraries to provide a new service to library users,” says Euesden in conclusion. “It allows researchers, students and other library visitors to view content in an environment that is tightly controlled, which addresses publishers’ concerns, and is in accordance with legislation.”

ERICOM – ACCESS DONE RIGHT

Ericom® Software is a leading global provider of Application Access and Virtualisation Solutions (VDI). Since 1993, Ericom has been helping users access business-critical applications running on a broad range of Microsoft® Windows® Terminal Servers, Virtual Desktops (VDI), Blade PCs, legacy hosts, and other systems. Ericom provides concrete business value by helping organisations realise the benefits of their IT investments. With offices in the United States, United Kingdom and EMEA, Ericom also has an extensive network of distributors and partners throughout North America, Europe, Asia and the Far East. Our expanding customer base is more than 30 thousand, with 7 million users.



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