



Customer Story

Healthcare Industry

PowerTerm WebConnect cures the IT pains of Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust



“PowerTerm WebConnect has been a stunning success in terms of helping us to achieve our goals. It is extraordinarily stable, and we have never had any complaints about performance.”

Steve Edwards
Head of IT Services
Gloucestershire Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust



Like many hospitals and public healthcare organisations across the UK, Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust looks forward to the availability of the new Electronic Patient Records System. Part of the Government’s National Programme for IT (NPFIT), this initiative will eventually deliver an integrated patient administration system for all hospitals nationwide. In the meantime, however, Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust still has to maintain the life of its existing systems and hardware.

The deployment of Ericom’s PowerTerm WebConnect solution has enabled Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust to bridge the gap between old and new. The solution has helped the organisation to optimise its legacy applications and make the transition from green screens to Windows-based systems with minimal disruption. Used by staff throughout the entire healthcare community in Gloucestershire, PowerTerm WebConnect also delivers lower IT support costs and exceptional standards of system reliability and performance.

INDUSTRY

Healthcare – Government

CUSTOMER

Gloucestershire Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

PRODUCT

Ericom® PowerTerm® WebConnect
HostView

CHALLENGES

- Improve access to legacy systems for 7000 users
- Minimise the impact on users of legacy system upgrades
- Extend the life of aging PCs
- Ensure high availability of critical systems 24x7x360
- Maintain clinical systems through a period of transition

SOLUTION

- Deploy Ericom’s PowerTerm WebConnect HostView

BENEFITS

- All users have a common way to access systems, easily and securely
- Legacy systems have been successfully upgraded without disruption to users
- Users experience consistently high performance despite the use of low specification, old PCs
- The solution is very reliable, stable and inexpensive to support, making it ideal for critical business applications
- The trust is successfully bridging the gap between old and new

“Our users find Powerterm WebConnect very easy to use”

All IT services at Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust are provided by an organisation called Countywide IT Services (CITS). Founded in 2006, CITS is primarily responsible for IT at the two main hospitals, but it is also contracted to support NHS Gloucestershire (the local Primary Care Trust) and mental health services in the region. Collectively, this healthcare community serves a population of around 500,000 people in the county of Gloucestershire and beyond.

Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust has two separate legacy Patient Administration Systems, both of which support a range of different activities, including: recording accident and emergency admissions; administering major pharmacy, radiology and pathology services; storing and retrieving patient records; and reporting test results to the GP community. “These are absolutely critical systems for the running of a hospital,” says Steve Edwards, Head of IT Services at Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust. “They are used to administer around 5,000 outpatient appointments every week and over 90,000 emergency attendances every year.”

But the Patient Administration Systems are not just used within the hospitals. They are also accessed on a daily basis by medical professionals working throughout the entire healthcare community. Given their vital importance, CITS needs to provide rapid, reliable and secure access to these systems 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

A PERIOD OF TRANSITION

Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust faced a number of pressing issues. Firstly, the legacy Patient Administration Systems were aging and needed to be upgraded to a Windows-based environment. Secondly, the PCs across the hospitals were of variable

specification, and many of them were reaching the end of their lives. Finally – and most significantly – the trust had to minimise the impact of any IT changes on users, so as to maintain the smooth operation of hospital processes.

In the medium term, Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust anticipated replacing its legacy systems with the Government’s new central Electronic Patient Records system. However, as this development had already been beset by several controversial delays, the organisation could not accurately predict when this new centralised system might be ready to go live in its region.

What Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust needed, therefore, was a solution to take it through a period of transition that was likely to span many years. It wanted to provide all users, across all of its sites, with a common way to access its legacy systems and also ensure a smooth transition from a green screen world to a Windows-based world.

AN INNOVATIVE NEW APPROACH

To address these issues, CITS first started looking at traditional PC-based terminal emulation products. It had inherited a number of such solutions, but with little or no consistency in deployment. It then discovered that Ericom offers an

innovative new approach, with a solution that enables users to access centrally-based applications over a secure network connection.

Called PowerTerm WebConnect, this solution removes the need for software to be installed on each individual PC. It is ideal for organisations that have low specification PCs, cover a large area or need to protect sensitive data. It also greatly reduces IT management and support time.

“Ericom has given us a way to bridge the widening gap between today and future (NPfIT)”

The solution uses a concurrent user model, which reduces the number of licenses that organisations need to buy. “Ericom emerged as the clear winner from our tender process in terms of functionality – first and foremost – and also in terms of value for money,” says Edwards. “The people at Ericom also demonstrated that they work in a professional manner and are enthusiastic and confident about their product.”

AN ‘EXCEPTIONALLY RELIABLE’ SOLUTION

CITS installed PowerTerm WebConnect at Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust very easily, with some initial consultancy support from Ericom. Edwards explains: “We did a small scale pilot for around two weeks and then just rolled it out to users. From start to finish, the whole deployment took little more than a month. It was very rapid.”

He adds: “With some software products, the gap between what you think you’ve bought and what you get can be quite significant, but this wasn’t the case here. Ericom delivered exactly what it promised.”



Ericom came with a very robust product and a very honest proposal. The strong relationship that was quickly formed between Ericom and ourselves was key to the successful delivery of the product."

CITS deployed PowerTerm WebConnect across three separate servers to ensure a very high standard of system resilience and user availability. However, it need not have worried, because, from the very first day, PowerTerm WebConnect has delivered consistently high performance. "It would be a major business issue, directly affecting patients, if users couldn't get access," says Edwards. "PowerTerm WebConnect has proved to be exceptionally reliable. It is extraordinarily stable, and we have never had any complaints about performance."

AN EASIER LIFE FOR THE IT TEAM

The ability to centrally manage PowerTerm WebConnect is an important benefit for CITS. It is responsible for over 7000 PCs dispersed over ten separate locations, many miles apart. "We need to support users over a geographically large area and didn't want to have to send IT technicians all over the place to address desktop issues," says Edwards.

Because all of Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust's PCs now have the same simple set up, it is easy for CITS to trouble shoot any issues. "The IT support team feels very confident with the product," says Edwards. "Problem analysis and resolution is much quicker. We have occasional problems with the PCs – and sometimes with the users – but rarely with PowerTerm WebConnect!"

This reduction in IT management time has contributed to a reduction in IT costs. "PowerTerm WebConnect has simplified and rationalised our IT infrastructure across our sites and doesn't require a lot of support from us," comments Edwards. "There is an ongoing cost benefit from that."

A CONSISTENT USER EXPERIENCE

Originally, CITS purchased 900 licenses for users at Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust, but this number has since been increased to 1,250 to provide access for staff elsewhere in the healthcare community too. "Our users find PowerTerm WebConnect very easy to use," says Edwards. "Wherever staff go – from ward to ward, from site to site or from hospital to hospital – they can access the system from any PC and the log-in screen will look exactly the same."

Since implementing PowerTerm WebConnect, CITS has pressed ahead with its modernisation plans for the healthcare community and has locally upgraded the legacy systems by moving them onto a Windows-based platform. "PowerTerm WebConnect has enabled us to complete the transition from old systems to new systems, while maintaining a consistent user interface and minimising disruption for users," says Edwards. "It has delivered in spades everything that we wanted from the product."

He adds: "Users just click on the screen like usual and away they go! The fact that the solutions are different on the back-end is invisible to them, which is great."

A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

PowerTerm WebConnect has now been in use at Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust and in the wider

healthcare community for over six years, and the product is continuing to deliver value for the organisation. "We originally bought it as a transition product to get us from A to B," explains Edwards. "What we have found – now that we have reached B – is that it is still adding a great deal of value beyond our transition period. Ericom has been a stunning success in terms of helping us to achieve our goals."

It has recently become apparent that the delivery of the Government's Electronic Patient Records initiative will be further delayed in the South West of England, because the appointed vendor responsible for the programme in this area has resigned from the project. While this delay, and the uncertainty that it brings, is deeply frustrating for the trust, it isn't as damaging as it might have been. "The delays in the delivery of the project in the South West have caused us considerable grief – but have also led us to gain additional value from PowerTerm WebConnect. The solution has given us the ability to continue to develop our existing systems, while we wait for the National Programme for IT to deliver."

Edwards believes that the delays in the National Programme will be creating considerable challenges for many hospitals across the country. He says: "As a result of the delays, hospitals are now in the situation that they have to extend the life of their existing hardware and systems for much longer than they would have originally anticipated. This is particularly difficult with regards to hardware, which has a finite life. Ericom has given us a way to bridge the widening gap between today and the future."

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, EMEA, India and China, 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 strong, with over 7 million installations.



North America

Ericom Software Inc.
231 Herbert Avenue, Bldg. #4
Closter, NJ 07624 USA
T +1 (201) 767 2210
F +1 (201) 767 2205
Toll-free 1 (888) 767 7876
Email info@ericom.com

UK & Western Europe

Ericom Software (UK) Ltd.
11a Victoria Square
Droitwich, Worcestershire
WR9 8DE United Kingdom
T + 44 (0) 845 644 3597
F + 44 (0) 845 644 3598
Email info@ericom.co.uk

International

Ericom Software Ltd.
8 Hamarpeh Street
Har Hotzvim Technology Park
Jerusalem 91450 Israel
T + 972 (2) 591 1700
F + 972 (2) 571 4737
Email info@ericom.com

Copyright © 1999-2009 Ericom Software Ltd. Ericom and PowerTerm are registered trademarks of Ericom Software Ltd. Other company and brand, products and service names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders.