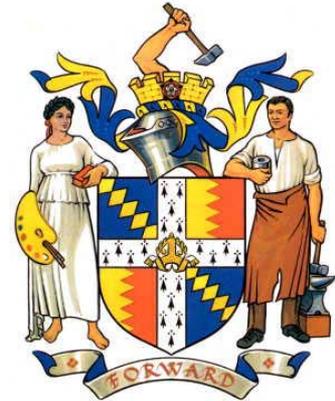


# NetSupport Manager Case Study

## Birmingham City Council

Birmingham City Council has a proud history of being at the forefront of innovation. This tradition is continued today as the City Council and its partners seek to develop and apply innovative approaches to the problems and opportunities produced by the dynamics of a large international city in an increasingly global economy.

Education IT is the IT department for Birmingham Education Department, providing support to schools, colleges and departmental users. It is the aim of the schools team to provide remote support to schools as an optional component of the annual support subscription using NetSupport Manager. Departmentally the product is also used, particularly in the remote management of the many NT servers that we have situated in offices around the city.



Each Birmingham school is to be linked to the Birmingham Grid network via an ISDN or a 2Mb leased line to create a 500 node WAN. This network is in turn connected, via a firewall, to the city WAN which currently numbers over 250 sites. All in all this means that a link can be made from the office desk to school utilising these network links.

Security is a big issue when connecting schools to the city network. To maintain the integrity of the network security model and also to satisfy audit regulations a number of the features of NetSupport have been utilised, including user acknowledgement, using the serial number in the security key, replay files and log files. 'Controlling' users must also authenticate to the school via NetSupport. These are combined with access control lists on the schools routers and restrictions applied using the firewall.

In an ongoing pilot project NetSupport Manager clients have been installed in a number of schools on one workstation and possibly the NT server. The project is at present aimed at the administration systems so is generally on an office workstation, although there is scope to expand this into the classroom and for internal use within the school. From monitoring calls received by the helpline it has become apparent that remote support equipped schools are being dealt with far more efficiently than those without the facility. Routine tasks that may take a school some time to perform can be quickly dealt with by first line helpline support staff. If not immediately resolvable fault diagnosis is far quicker and the correct second line support resources can be immediately assigned to the problem. Site visits are reduced thus saving on travel costs and time. The FTP functionality of NetSupport Manager is frequently used to transfer schools data to the office for analysis, update configurations and even in some cases restore data remotely.

Initial reactions from schools are very encouraging and once used to the concept they are more than happy to use the facility as they are seeing a far quicker turnaround of their problems



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