

A NetMotion Mobility Case Study

Sales Force Application Flies over GPRS with Mobility XE

Company profile

Optident Ltd is one of the UK's largest providers of quality materials, techniques and services to the dental profession. The company sells technology and innovation combined with complete systems and the latest techniques, all interacting to ensure that customers can deliver a high quality, reliable service to their clients.



Situation

In order to improve service to their 14,500 direct customers in the UK the company was seeking to provide a real-time pricing and stock availability system to their distributed sales force. They had successfully developed an application for Windows Mobile 5 PDAs which provided all the functionality they required.

Technical Issue

In the development lab their decision to secure the connection back to 'head-office' using a standard VPN product supplied by an industry leading firewall manufacturer had seemed a safe choice. However when it came to field usability tests with the prospective sales force criticisms were made of the unwieldy and complex sign-on procedures required by the VPN software. To add to the disruption the application failed as the users roamed between Wi-Fi and GPRS networks. Users further reported that the application was not performing as effectively over the slower cellular link as initial tests had indicated.

Optident's IT Manager, Andy Brennan was faced with the challenge of how to ensure the success of the mobility project. Looking ahead, additional business requirements existed at Optident for a universal VPN solution that would operate consistently across their installed base of laptop computers, PDA devices and an increasing number of Smartphone devices.

Solution

Andy needed to find a single solution to solve both the short term issues with the PDA application, but also meet Optident's long term secure communications needs that would include Smartphones and laptops. After thorough analysis, they began evaluating NetMotion Mobility XE, a Mobile VPN product specifically designed to address the challenges presented when using wireless networks for data communications. The Mobility XE software was installed on both the Server and PDAs in an afternoon.

Solution Overview

Customer Profile

Leading UK Dental Products Supplier with a mobile sales force serving over 14,500 direct customers.

Situation

Newly developed Windows Mobile 5 Sales Force application for PDAs was running slowly over wireless networks and users were being logged off the VPN everytime they lost a GPRS cellular connection.

Solution

NetMotion Mobility XE client software was installed on Orange SPV PDA and Smartphone devices to provide Application Session Persistence and Wireless Network Optimisation back to the Mobility Server at head office.

What The Customer Says

"Even the most techno-phobic salesman can now use our systems with ease and confidence".



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Benefits

“The effect was noticeable immediately” says Brennan, “During the evaluation period Mobility XE proved itself by keeping our sales team application connected while roaming across all the mobile and wireless networks we use, maintaining an “always-on” connection.”

A supplementary benefit of Mobility XE software was found to be its ability to optimise the use of slow network links, providing a faster connection. Thus it improved applications performance and provided a much better user experience to the sales force.

Andy Brennan continues “Our GPRS reception here at head office is virtually unusable. We had therefore booked a hotel suite in a 3G area for the roll out demo. Upon installing Mobility XE, the performance of the devices whilst at head office, was so fantastic, we cancelled the hotel room and ran the roll out demo in the boardroom. We were able to profess about performance being this good, even here, at head office”.



Obviously one of the concerns any organisation has when deploying a mobile solution similar to the system at is the security exposure when a device is lost or stolen. To mitigate against this risk Optident make use of Mobility XE Policy Management to quarantine devices which are reported missing, thus ensuring that no inappropriate access is made to corporate systems.

Optident have since doubled their order of device licenses enabling them to extend secure mobile computing to the laptop users in the company.

The final word must go to Andy Brennan. “Since completing the roll-out the feedback we have had from all users has been fantastic, data throughput speeds are massively improved, especially on GPRS. It runs like a dream, thanks to the support from NetMotion Wireless.”

Supported Platforms

Client platforms	Mobility	Wireless LAN/PAN	Wired LAN/WAN
Windows Mobile 5.0, PPC & Smart phone Windows Mobile 2003 & 2003 SE Windows CE 4.2, 4.21, 5.0 Windows 2000 Windows XP Professional (SP1 & SP2)	Subnet roaming Supernet roaming InterNetwork Roaming™ Fastest interface selection Application Session Persistence	Any IP-based WLAN, including: 802.11 b/g (including hotspots) 802.11 a Bluetooth IrDA	Any IP-based network, including: Cable modem Dial-up (circuit-switched) DSL Ethernet ISDN NAT support All
Key Exchange Elliptic Curve Diffie-Hellman (ECDH)	Acceleration Data compression (lossless) Web image acceleration (lossy)	Wireless WAN Any IP-based WWAN, including: 802.16 (WiMax) CDPD EDGE GPRS UMTS HSDPA 1xEVDO 1xRTT	Server platforms Windows Server 2003(SP1) Windows 2000 Server (SP3 or SP4) Processor: Pentium III minimum. Dual-processor, 2 GHz or faster recommended. RAM: Minimum 512 MB. 2GB recommended Disk space: 500 MB min.
Encryption FIPS 140-2 validated cryptographic libraries supporting AES (128-bit, 192-bit, 256-bit) <small>*Only available on Windows XP & 2000</small>	Authentication Microsoft Active Directory Microsoft NTLM RADIUS (PEAP, LEAP, EAP-GTC) RSA SecurID		

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