

Rotherham Council Creates Secure VPN with CRYPTO-Shield

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James Clifford, Senior Network Specialist, RBT (Connect) Ltd.



Progressive council seeks strong authentication.

When Rotherham Council wanted to improve productivity and work/life balance for its employees by enabling them to work from locations outside the office, it knew security and cost would be key issues. RBT (Rotherham Brought Together), a joint venture between British Telecom & Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council to provide IT Services to Rotherham Council, was tasked with finding a secure and cost-effective solution, and to have it up and running within six months.

“Rotherham Council knew that there would be many benefits for its staff if they could work from outside the office, including enabling single parents to spend more time at home. But it was also understood that we could only provide this functionality if we could guarantee that no unauthorized users would be able to gain access to the Rotherham network,” said James Clifford, Senior Network Specialist, RBT (Connect) Ltd. “Rotherham Council would only approve the project if RBT could find a secure authentication solution that would fit within the Council’s budgetary constraints.”

RBT began researching available authentication options to secure network

access, including RSA’s SecureID, but found significant stumbling blocks.

With its strong Two-Factor Authentication solution and low cost of entry, CRYPTOCARD stood out among the options considered.

“RSA’s licensing model was beyond budget as it required a large initial expenditure and a re-purchasing of tokens every three years,” explained Clifford. “Also, its user interface was overly complicated, and the tokens came pre-initialized creating an undue security risk – as another party would also have a complete list of Rotherham Council’s codes,” Clifford said. “All in all, RSA was simply too cumbersome to use and too expensive to purchase and run.”

Enter security consultants, Oxygen Secure...

It was at this time that Clifford spoke with London-based IT Security Specialists, Oxygen Secure Systems. Oxygen suggested that Rotherham consider an authentication solution from CRYPTOCARD. Oxygen explained that CRYPTOCARD’s authentication technology provides a high-level security, does not come pre-initialized, and is ‘ATM-machine simple’ to use, and is much lower in cost than RSA’s solution.

Case in Point

The Rotherham Council Solution

- As innovative employers, Rotherham Council was looking for a remote access solution to allow workers the flexibility to work from home while enhancing ability to deliver services
- Cost, security and ease of use were all factors in the decisions
- For its ‘ideal balance of security, ease of use and affordability’, CRYPTOCARD’s Two-Factor Authentication solution was selected
- Utilizing a mixture of Smart Card and Key Chain Tokens, Rotherham’s need for strong and affordable authentication has been achieved.

Case Study

“When Oxygen explained the benefits of CRYPTOCard’s authentication technology, and the high-profile organizations, that were already using the solution, including NASA, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Deutsche Bank, Google, and Australia Parliament House, it sounded like an ideal fit for Rotherham Council,” Clifford explained. “But, the key to beginning a pilot program was the significantly-lower upfront costs CRYPTOCard presented,” Clifford continued. “Oxygen also explained that as CRYPTOCard’s tokens have replaceable batteries Rotherham Council would not be trapped in an expensive licensing model requiring them to replace tokens every few years.

CRYPTOCard’s solution couples something in the user’s possession (a multi-function smart card, USB token, hardware token, or software token), with something the user knows (their PIN), to positively identify all local and remote users attempting to access the network. With the Smart Card Token’s familiar bank machine like logon, CRYPTOCard eliminates the user resistance that is often associated with installing an additional layer of security.

“By generating a unique password for every log-on attempt, CRYPTOCard not only makes it simple for Rotherham Council’s staff to securely access the network, but by removing passwords from the user, the solution effectively eliminates the significant time and expense associated with resetting forgotten ‘static’ passwords, or having to enforce regular password changes – actually providing institutions with a full return on investment that could be measured in a matter of months,” explained James Cook, Sales Manager, Oxygen Secure Systems.

The new authentication technology would make it simple for Rotherham Council’s authorized remote staff to safely access any services from any location through the VPN.



Rotherham Town Crest

A Team Effort

Rotherham Council started working with Oxygen Secure Systems, and after initial testing, was happy that the solution provided the functionality, ease of administration, and price combination it required.

“It was quickly decided that CRYPTOCard provided the ideal balance of security, ease of use, and affordability that Rotherham Council was looking for,” commented Clifford. “It was agreed that the solution would become the standard, and that RBT would install the technology for Rotherham Council with a view to rolling out the technology to other Councils over time.”

RBT began by installing an ADSL connection to each remote location, with a Cisco VPN connection back to the head office using two Cisco 3030 VPN concentrators. British Telecom supplied a 10 meg pipe to the ADSL connections.

“RBT then worked with Oxygen Secure Systems to integrate CRYPTOCard’s RADIUS server with the Cisco VPN,” explained Clifford. “CRYPTOCard’s solution is basically plug and play, and was the fastest part of the entire project.”

Case Study

A Perfect Fit...For Any User

Offering numerous different token varieties, CRYPTOCard's versatile solution has provided Rotherham Council with the ability to issue different tokens to employees that best fit their specific access requirements.

"The SC-1 Smart Card Token, with built-in door access capability, delivers both physical and network authentication to provide Rotherham Council's IT staff with 24/7 secure access to the building, the LAN and the VPN," said Clifford. "Alternatively, as most remote users do not require 24/7 door access, we can utilize the cost-effective KT-1 keychain token that provides simple secure access without requiring Rotherham Council to purchase Smart Card readers."

The solution also makes it easy for Rotherham Council to ensure that its list of users is constantly updated so that only authorized users can access the system. To add, remove, or move a user an administrator simply drags a token from one group folder to another, and it is just as simple to disable former employees or temporary users that no longer require access to the network.

Simple, Affordable, and Highly Secure

By affordably providing the guaranteed system-authentication capability Rotherham Council required, coupled with the ease of use its staff requested, CRYPTOCard's technology has made it simple for RBT to meet the security targets that was set. And Oxygen Secure Systems played a big part in successfully completing this project.

"Oxygen Secure Systems was extremely knowledgeable and has been a great help in installing CRYPTOCard's authentication solution," concluded Clifford. "Now, smaller offices with three-to-five people can work from home, which is more convenient for the staff and more cost effective – enabling Rotherham Council to reallocate funds to other needed services," Clifford continued. "Also, as everybody from IT staff to social workers can now access the system at any time from any location, the authentication solution has not only saved time and improved service, but has also enabled Rotherham Council to improve productivity and work/life balance for its employees."

About CRYPTOCard

CRYPTOCard is a leader and innovator in the Network Authentication Industry. Its multi-awarded, much-lauded Two-Factor Authentication options include both a server based or 'product' solution (CRYPTO-Server) and a Managed Authentication Service (CRYPTO-MAS). The combination allows organizations of any size and means to adopt a strong authentication policy. CRYPTOCard is unique in the industry in their commitment to ensuring their products/services work with any common network architecture including OS compatibility (Windows, Linux, Mac OS X), webserver flexibility (IIS, Apache) and database options (Active Directory, LDAP, Open Directory etc). Add to that the outstanding 'out of the box' interoperability with many top industry network solutions including Citrix, Checkpoint, Cisco and many more, and you begin to see how CRYPTOCard has grown since its origin in 1989 to become a thriving enterprise doing business in more than 70 countries.

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