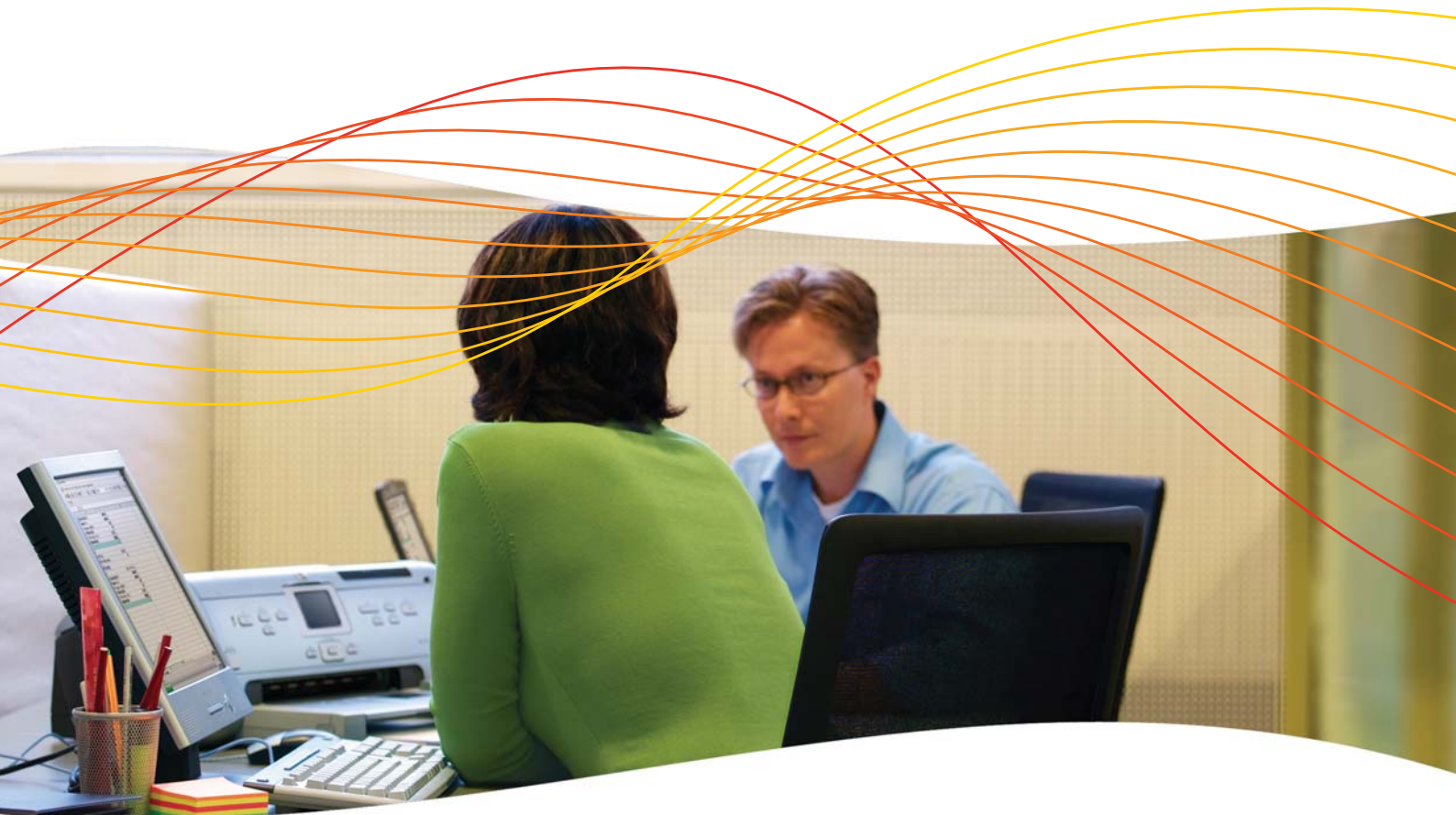


Kennedys
Legal advice in black and white



ProCurve Networking by HP

The right verdict for top London lawyers



“ProCurve switches did exactly what we wanted; they were cheaper than Cisco and they came with a lifetime warranty. We also had a supplier who knew the products very well so it was a very good experience.”

Carolyn Lees
IT director
Kennedys



Established over a century ago, London law firm Kennedys has experienced considerable growth in recent years. In the mid-nineties, it had two national offices and 80 employees. Now, it has six national offices and close to 500 employees.

Specialising in litigation and dispute resolution for a client base predominantly, but not exclusively, in the insurance, healthcare, construction and rail industries, Kennedys currently occupies three buildings in the City of London, with future plans to consolidate into one new building. It has additional offices in Brentwood, Cambridge and Belfast; overseas sites in Auckland and Hong Kong and associates in 13 other countries from Mumbai to Moscow.

Rapid expansion

While rapid expansion was a sound testament to the success of the business, it brought many problems from an IT perspective because the company's networks just couldn't cope with the sudden increase in headcount and sites.

Kennedys' IT director, Carolyn Lees, described the situation she found when she joined the company: "Our IT room was the most atrocious spaghetti junction with cables going from one place to another and nothing was labelled. Although we presumed that the underfloor cabling was all pure 100 Mb transmission, we found there were points where the cables had been joined by 10Mb adaptors."

Standardise and simplify

With this mismatch of switches and hubs, the networks failed on an almost daily basis, cutting staff off from vital data and impairing the email. Drastic action was needed, so Kennedys decided to strip everything out and start again.

Determined to standardise and simplify its environment, Kennedys installed a network of ProCurve Networking switches and routers with hi-tech dynamic routing that would improve continuity of service and also support its ambitious disaster recovery strategy.

"We got network specialist PDS Communications on board and we undertook some quite strategic thinking about what we wanted to do," added Lees. "We decided that ProCurve Networking products would provide the reliability and functionality we needed. We matched them against Cisco and found that they had various advantages. In a nutshell, ProCurve switches did exactly what we wanted; they were cheaper than Cisco and they came with a lifetime warranty. In PDS, we also had a supplier who knew the products very well so it was a very good experience."

Customer at a Glance

Industry sector: Legal profession
 Name: Kennedys
 Headquarters: London, UK
 Founded: 1899
 Telephone: + 44 (0)20 7638 3688
 Number of employees: 500
 URL: www.kennedys-law.com

Partner:

Company: PDS Communications Ltd
 Headquarters: Dartford, UK
 Telephone: + 44 (0)845 230 0505
 Number of employees: 10
 URL: www.pds-comms.co.uk
 Business: Total network specialists
 Products: Best of breed network solutions

Challenge

- International law firm Kennedys has expanded significantly in recent years
- This has increased its staff headcount and number of offices
- Its central IT hub in the City of London could not keep pace and frequent crashes were seriously affecting the business

Solution

- After some strategic thinking about its goals, Kennedys decided to go back to basics with its IT solution and start again
- It brought in network specialists PDS Communications, who designed and installed a new HP ProCurve network based around 5308 and 2524 switches
- The network features dynamic routing and VLANS for greater resilience

Results

- Kennedys now has a totally resilient network with no single point of failure
- Its disaster recovery site can get all critical elements up and running in under an hour, and the network will support its plans to install VoIP
- The reliability of HP ProCurve has increased business efficiency and improved the working lives of staff

Dynamic rollout

PDS Communications' initial 100 link installation was at the company's Chiswell Street HQ in London. They then migrated links out to other buildings, starting with Layer 2 and implementing VLANS (Virtual Local Area Networks) and routing protocols as they went, to add greater stability.

They built the core of Kennedys network around six ProCurve 5308 switches which are designed to accommodate the most demanding network needs, offering scalable Layers 2,3, and 4 switching in compact four or eight slot modular form factors. The 5308 switches are spread across the London offices with three at the main Chiswell Street site and the fully resilient network is completed with a number of ProCurve 2524 switches on the edge of each site and at lesser sites in Brentwood, Newmarket, Belfast and abroad.

ProCurve's dynamic routing capabilities provide major benefits for Kennedys with each switch capable of recognising link failures and automatically diverting traffic across to a secondary route - then recognising when the failure has been rectified and automatically diverting traffic back to the primary link. In addition to increasing the overall resilience of the system, this triangulated solution also supports Kennedys disaster recovery site in London's Docklands. This is a replica hub that kicks in automatically if the main Chiswell Street hub goes down and tests have shown that all critical systems can be back up within an hour!

Total resilience

Another outstanding factor of this ProCurve Networking installation is that it will support Kennedys plans to install VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) with the possible replacement of some 2524 switches with Power Over Ethernet 2600 switches.

The company is the first law firm in England to get the BS 7799 data security accreditation that includes stringent access restrictions. Kennedys also increases network security by hiring a specialist firm who regularly attempt to hack into its systems, then provide reports on any loopholes. Kennedys sites are connected over BT Equip wide area networks but management problems have lead the company to consider a return to point-to-point leased line connections, bringing communication connectivity back to the core HP switches.

Secure solution

The result of this ProCurve installation is a network that does not have one single point of failure and despite the large amount of data Kennedys filter over the system, daily work and evening back-ups would not be seriously affected even if a major switch went down.

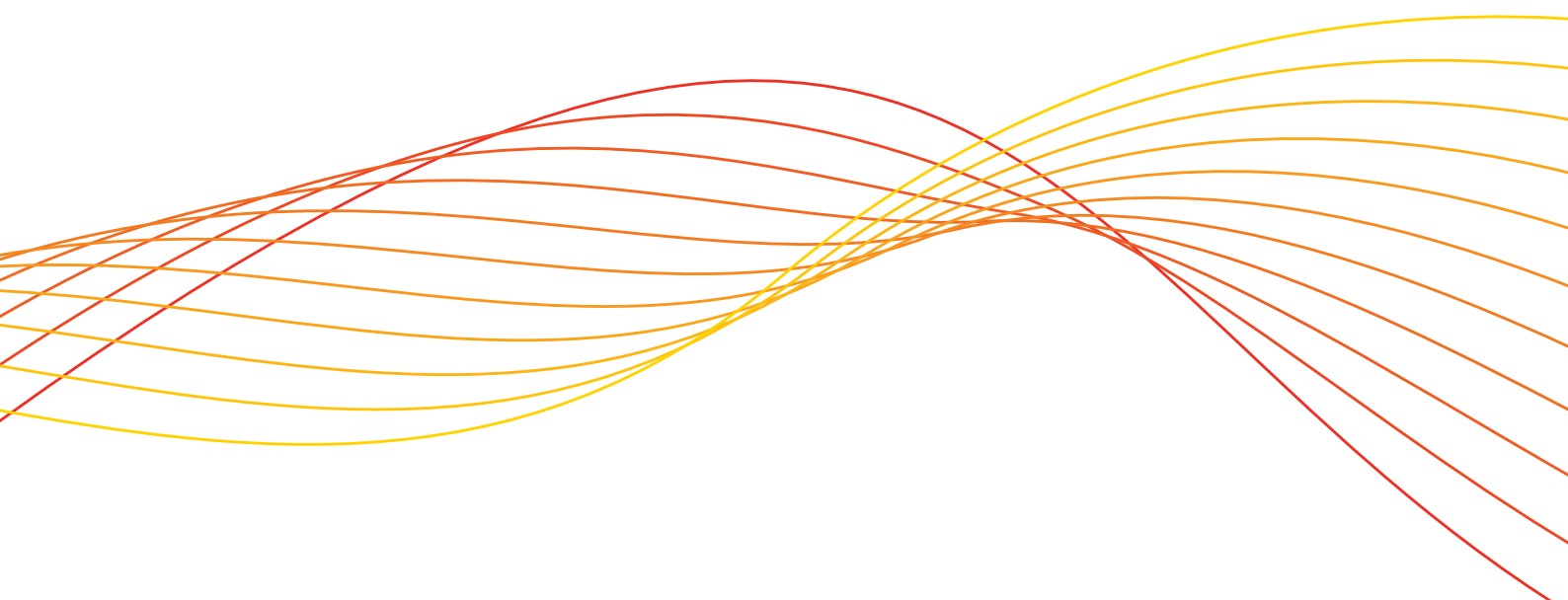
"The bottom line for us is the reliability of ProCurve Networking equipment which has made our firm more efficient and has greatly improved the working lives of our staff," added Lees.

What Makes it Work Hardware

- 6 x HP ProCurve Switch 5308xl
- 29 x HP ProCurve Switch 2524

Why ProCurve Networking by HP?

- HP ProCurve networking by HP provided everything Kennedys needed at a cheaper price than Cisco
- All HP ProCurve switches come with a lifetime warranty
- It was important to have access to the expertise of a local supplier like PDS



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Publication Number: 55983-2212EE Written: April 2005

