

The Lowry Centre Protects Customers' Payment Details with Secure VPN Solution from Network Defence

Mobile data solution from Network Defence enables The Lowry to offer its customers a secure real-time mobile box office service

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Darren Mullin, IT manager, The Lowry Centre

Key Benefits:

- Enables The Lowry’s ticket agency, Quaytickets, to set up temporary mobile box office booths, allowing customers to purchase tickets for upcoming events in real time
- Reliable and secure transactions for Quaytickets’ customers
- Flexible remote access for Lowry employees whilst maintaining existing security and access policies
- Reduces IT support staff costs

The Challenge:

The Lowry Centre is a prestigious arts centre based in the heart of the Salford Quays, Greater Manchester, housing two main theatres and studio space for performing arts. Opened in 2000, The Lowry attracts around 850 thousand visitors a year.

Quaytickets, The Lowry’s ticket agency, is a not-for profit business which offers tickets for events at venues in Manchester and beyond.

Although Quaytickets generates a high level of sales from its head office at The Lowry they wanted to be able to bring events happening in and around Greater Manchester – such as the bi-annual Manchester International Festival 2009 - closer to event and theatre goers by offering them the opportunity to buy tickets from mobile box offices located throughout central Manchester.

The Lowry wanted to find a cost-effective, flexible and above all secure, remote access solution, which would enable Quaytickets to offer its customers a safe and easy way to buy and collect tickets on-the-spot.

The Solution:

Following a five-way pitch, The Lowry selected Network Defence for the Quaytickets project because of their IT and data expertise as well as their history of delivering innovative and cost effective solutions for The Lowry in the past.

Network Defence's recommended solution was implemented as it met The Lowry's key requirements for security and flexibility; fit their network setup and complied with data security standards. It was also the most cost-effective and scalable solution for future requirements.

After the initial consultation programme Network Defence recommended and implemented a Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI:DSS) compliant VPN solution that would ensure user data was kept secure at all times using the remote ticket offices.

With the mobile data solution Quaytickets employees can connect to the Internet via a 3G or any other Internet connection. They then connect into The Lowry network via the VPN software to access the necessary data needed to make a transaction and print out tickets in real time.

The secure browser-based solution gives authorised users access to the booking and ticketing applications through password authentication and is protected through encryption and tunnelling. Furthermore employees' access levels can be controlled according to their job roles.

The new mobile ticket offices are due to go live in time for the Christmas season.

The Benefits:

Time saving. The mobile data solution has enabled Quaytickets to set up temporary mobile box office booths in and around Greater Manchester. Quaytickets customers can now easily purchase tickets for upcoming events in real time without having to make a trip to Salford Quays.

Secure. A key benefit of the solution is the level of security it provides for Quaytickets customers. Being PCI:DSS compliant means customers can be assured that their payment card details will be fully safe when making a transaction, and facilitating reliable and secure transactions means Quaytickets will be able to grow its business by extending the provision of ad-hoc mobile box offices anywhere in the country.

Furthermore employees' access levels can be controlled. Locking down data access levels in accordance with employees' job roles enhances the level of security throughout the organisation and ensures the current level of security in place at The Lowry is not compromised.

Flexible. Another significant benefit of the solution is it provides remote access for employees working remotely. This delivers greater flexibility to a business by allowing employees to check their emails when out of the office.

Cost saving. In addition the web-based nature of the solution eliminates the need to install new software on users' PCs. Easy to set up and manage, Network Defence's solution has minimised the need for IT support for installation or administration rights and requires virtually no training.

Darren Mullin said: "Network Defence's consultative approach to our requirements has enabled us to bring events happening in and around Greater Manchester closer to thousands of more people, whilst at the same time giving them peace of mind that their details are safe and secure.

"Network Defence has been a technical partner of The Lowry for several

years and has proven to be efficient as well as reliable, with a no nonsense approach to delivering technical solutions. We considered several other vendors but none were comparable to the overall solution from Network Defence. As well as being cost effective it was able to cater for our fairly bespoke ticket selling solution. We have been particularly impressed by the extremely high level of security it provides, and the fact that it meets all our requirements.”

Looking to the Future:

The Lowry plans to grow the Quaytickets business and extend the provision of its mobile box offices to other areas of the country. This will enable event and theatre goers all over the country to easily buy tickets on-the-spot without having to worry about the security of their payment card details.

Technologies used:

- PCI: DSS compliance
- Remote access via 3G
- Full encryption
- VPN access