



About Rethink

Founded over 30 years ago Rethink are the leading national mental health membership charity, working to help everyone affected by severe mental illness recover a better quality of life.

Their aim is to make a practical and positive difference by providing hope and empowerment through effective services, information and support to all those who need them.

www.rethink.org

Project Overview

Business Requirement

- A stable, reliable network environment that could support real-time video conferencing

Solution

- Deployment of an application aware IP VPN solution

Business Value

- Consistent bandwidth & secure access to centralised applications
- £100K savings delivered through video conferencing deployment

Industry Focus

- A leading national mental health membership charity

Rethink rethink their Wide Area Network and deploy a QoS enabled IP VPN solution

The Challenge

Rethink operate out of seven main offices and are headquartered in London. They also have over 250 service locations with up to 10 users at each site. A dedicated Leased Line was in place at their London Office with other sites connecting to the Internet using a mixture of ADSL and SDSL broadband connectivity. Information was shared between these sites and back to Rethinks' data centre using a traditional IPSec VPN that encrypted traffic sent across the Internet.

Although this WAN (Wide Area Network) solution met their immediate requirements Rethink were looking to roll out advanced applications including CRM and video conferencing. These new demands on the network would mean that greater bandwidth was required and with service levels deteriorating they decided to consolidate all their services with one provider and began to identify potential partners.

Underpinning Rethink's requirement for a more reliable and advanced WAN was the desire to use video conferencing as a business tool. Video conferencing was a key requirement for Rethink as it would allow their staff to work more efficiently, reduce time and costs associated with travelling and also help enhance their green credentials. Rethink's current network was incapable of handling video conferencing traffic due partly to bandwidth limitations but crucially due to the fact that the network could not identify video traffic and treat it with the priority it required.

Rethink needed secure and reliable access to critical applications, improved support and a network that was fully managed and capable of handling real-time traffic. Realising the need to re-evaluate their current connectivity and provider Rethink turned to Zen Internet for advice and recommendations.

Zen are by far the best ISP I have worked with.

Lakhbir Kang, Rethink

That's Zen thinking

“I was extremely impressed with the professionalism & planning of the IP VPN solution.”

Lakhbir Kang, Rethink

The Solution

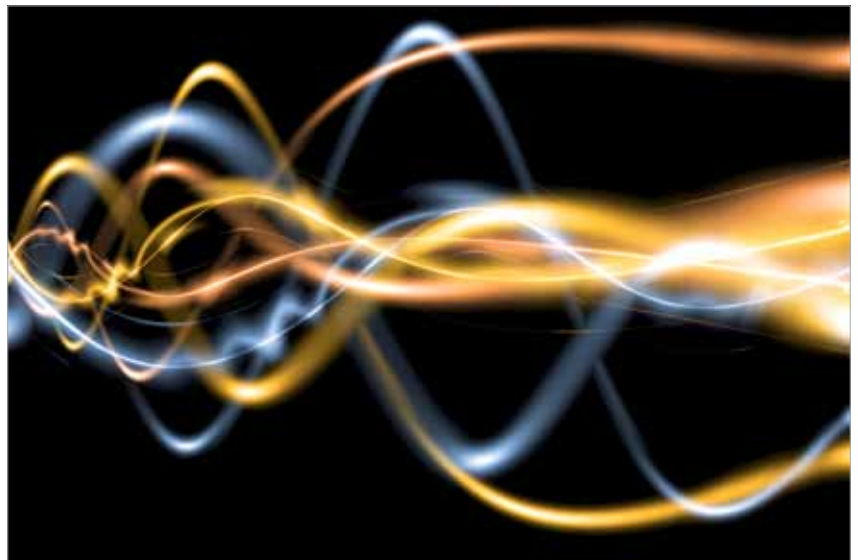
Following a consultation with Rethink we proposed they connect their seven core office locations into an IP VPN solution that offered complete security for inter-site traffic and provided the platform for deploying their video conferencing solution. We also proposed a second IP VPN solution to provide a private network for their service locations ensuring that the two networks were segregated to offer additional security and easier administration.

A dedicated project manager was assigned to the deployment and was responsible for the successful roll-out of the new network. The London HQ was connected to the primary IP VPN using a 100Mbps Ethernet circuit with other sites connecting to the network using 10Mbps Ethernet circuits all with various levels of bandwidth provisioned. Cisco 2800 series ISR's (Integrated Services Routers) were deployed at each of the seven sites and were fully configured and tested by Zen's managed support teams.

Rethink's video conferencing bandwidth requirements were calculated and QoS (Quality of Service) policies were applied at each of the sites participating in the primary IP VPN. These QoS policies were then applied across our core network using MPLS (Multi-protocol Label Switching) packet tagging to ensure end-to-end performance. The network intelligence delivered by the QoS implementation meant that regardless of how busy the network was video conferencing traffic streams would maintain a consistent performance ensuring that virtual meetings could take place whenever required.

Initially 53 service sites were connected into the second IP VPN using ADSL broadband connectivity terminated using Thomson ST546 routers. Rethink has plans to introduce other service locations in the future and these can easily be incorporated into the network within just five working days. Rethink took the opportunity to host their critical applications in Zen's data centre to improve application response times, improve security and support their disaster recovery requirements.

Breakout to the public Internet was provided from our data centre and secured by two Fortigate 310B firewalls that were deployed in a high availability cluster. These Unified Threat Management firewalls were configured and managed by Zen's managed support teams and offered deep packet inspection and protection against spam, viruses, and network intrusions. The firewalls also protected traffic travelling to and from the primary to the secondary IP VPN.



The Implementation

A Zen Internet PRINCE2 certified project manager was assigned to the project and given complete responsibility for the smooth implementation of the solution. The project manager liaised with staff internally and at Rethink to co-ordinate all aspects of the solution and implementation. Following consultation a project plan was agreed, incorporating any risks or issues that could potentially have an impact on the project.

The project manager then set up a virtual team internally and co-ordinated the transition to the new network. It was vital that the network was implemented in an acceptable and timely manner with minimal disruption. The complete solution was carefully planned and then deployed over a period of 6 months in line with Rethink's requirements.

“I was extremely impressed with the professionalism and planning of the IP VPN and specifically the design and implementation of QoS to support our video conferencing requirements.

Any downtime was planned over weekends and was carefully planned, communicated and accepted by Rethink in advance. All essential outages were kept to a minimum.”

Lakhibir Kang, Rethink



rethink
severe mental illness



Benefits of IP VPN

IP VPN provides a completely private wide area network for your business, offering prioritisation of key applications and corporate grade Unified Threat Management (UTM) Internet Security for all participating sites.

Key benefits of the solution include:

- Security
- Reliability
- Performance
- Scalability
- Network convergence
- Controlled Internet breakout

The Benefits

Since deploying Zen's IP VPN solution Rethink have experienced dramatic improvements in employee productivity made possible by improved network performance and reliability. Rethink staff are now assured of a reliable and stable connection to critical applications hosted in Zen's data centre or at their HQ.

Video conferencing has been fully deployed between the seven sites connected into the primary IP VPN. Network intelligence within the IP VPN has made the deployment of this advanced technology possible and it has already delivered some major benefits for Rethink. Within the 1st year of deployment the video conferencing application helped Rethink save £100,000 in travel costs with ambitions to increase these savings to £150,000 in year 2 and £200,000 in year 3.

The new collaboration technology also improved productivity as staff can easily hold virtual meetings with geographically dispersed staff at short notice. The new technology also had a positive impact on the environment reducing Rethink's overall emissions and has helped provide a better work/life balance for their staff with less travelling and overnight stays.

Rethink are now benefiting from a fully managed Wide Area Network solution. The in-house IT teams are spending more time focusing on internal system development and delivering a better service across all their branch offices.

Having deployed a real-time video conferencing solution Rethink are now considering introducing VoIP to the IP VPN. The network's ability to handle real-time traffic and Zen's approach to planning and deploying QoS has provided the confidence to implement this technology in the future. This will enable Rethink to deliver further cost savings and productivity enhancements helping the business to deliver on its main aim 'to support people with mental illnesses recover a better quality of life.'

“Zen are by far the best ISP I have worked with... the key [Zen] people for the delivery of this project constantly delivered on time and within budget to Rethink, a solution that is a big winner and highly recommendable.”

Lakhbir Kang, Rethink

Zen Internet

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Zen Internet

Zen Internet, an independent Internet Service Provider (ISP), has been delivering services to business and residential users in the UK since 1995.

Led by founder and Managing Director Richard Tang, Zen's mission is to provide the best ISP service in the UK and is committed to investing in the latest technologies and providing high levels of service, support and reliability.

Zen's Portfolio

Whether you want a fast, reliable Internet connection, want to build an online presence, or need a server to provide hosted applications, we can help. Our portfolio includes:

Connectivity

- Broadband
- VoIP
- Leased Lines & Ethernet
- IP VPN
- Managed Firewalls

Hosting

- Domain Names
- Web Hosting
- Managed Hosting
- Dedicated Servers
- Co-location

Data Backup

