

Case Study

UK University Drives Efficiency & Productivity with EfficientIP

Project Type:

- Full DNS, DHCP, and IPAM replacement

Key Benefits:

- Painless upgrade from previous Infoblox solution
- Major cost savings
- Increased efficiency and productivity
- Enhanced visibility and search capabilities



Manchester Metropolitan University

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) is the fifth largest university and the second most applied-to tertiary institution in the UK. In addition to the campus team and support line, MMU has about 37,000 students and 4,000 staff members, including 40 in the IT infrastructure department.



With an amalgamation of different colleges with various specialisms, including Technology, Art and Design, MMU is dedicated to providing inspirational teaching to its students. To keep pace with demand and ensure its staff members have access to what they need when they need it, MMU relies heavily on its IT and networking systems.

However, like most universities, it has been challenged by the number of connected devices students bring to the campus each day, expanding the amount of IP addresses under management. To successfully deal with 600 switches that handle more than 10,000 IP addresses and carry out the day-to-day operations, MMU had been using a DNS, DHCP and IPAM (DDI) solution from Infoblox. As it approached end-of-support, Justin Michell, Network Engineer, took the decision to start a tender process and investigate additional DDI solutions that were available on the market.

Project Overview

With a clear set of requirements in mind, Justin and his team evaluated solutions from multiple vendors including EfficientIP and Infoblox. Following the first meeting with EfficientIP and a demo of the product, Justin and his team were very pleased by the capabilities the solution had to offer, and decided to make the move.

“We would have gone with whichever solution was right for us. Technically, the easy option would have been to carry on with Infoblox as it would have been a straight upgrade, but financially, it made sense to go with EfficientIP. Their DDI solution was three times cheaper and more feature-rich,” Justin explained.

The solution purchased by MMU consisted of two EfficientIP SOLIDserver™ 1100 appliances for IPAM, two EfficientIP SOLIDserver™ 1100 appliances for internal DHCP and DNS and two EfficientIP SOLIDserver™ 550 appliances for external DNS. The architecture required by the university also included the NetChange IPLocator feature, which queries network switches and pulls information on what devices are connected to particular interfaces. The resulting data is then stored in the IPAM database.

Transition Process and Key Benefits

“From start to finish, it has been a painless upgrade. We were working with EfficientIP’s knowledgeable and competent engineers who have helped us at every turn - no question or request has been too much. I would recommend to anyone who is looking for a DDI solution to look into EfficientIP, because I cannot fault the service or the product.”

In addition to meeting the same functional requirements as the previous solution, Justin stated efficiency and productivity are the two key benefits he noticed. “The NetChange module has made a big difference, especially for our campus deans. They can respond much quicker to an issue.”

Since deploying EfficientIP, the university has also been impressed with the visibility and the search capabilities. “You can get a lot of information from one search. With other products or systems, you would need to do two or three different searches to get that depth of information. This has helped the staff to easily embrace the new solution”, Justin noted.

EfficientIP engineers’ efficiency and expertise was another win. “The EfficientIP support team is absolutely brilliant. Every time I’ve logged a call, we’ve gotten to the root of the problem. Their team will stay on the phone, even for hours, until they are happy with the outcome - whether it either needs further testing or the problem has been fixed. There are not many companies out there that offer that kind of support.” he explained.

Plans For The Future

“It will have taken three months to get service in and up and running. The only issue we had occurred during the whole upgrade when we were changing the public DNS records. With JANET, the glue record was not put in so after an hour of services migrated across, we started disappearing from the Internet. However, the EfficientIP’s engineers spotted it quickly and everything came back as it should. For the scale of the project we were doing, it was 99% smooth, we couldn’t have had it go much smoother”, he stated.

In terms of the future usage of EfficientIP solutions, MMU is currently looking at bolt-on products, notably a dedicated unit for running NetChange due to a potential scale in devices. However, “the functionality we have at the moment covers everything we need for DNS, DHCP and IPAM and is working nicely,” Justin pointed out.

“Our security team is also always looking to enhance our protection, so EfficientIP’s DNS Guardian or another of their security products are currently being considered for future deployments.”

About EfficientIP:

As one of the world’s fastest growing DDI vendors, EfficientIP helps organizations drive business efficiency through agile, secure and reliable network infrastructures. Our unified management framework for DNS-DHCP-IPAM (DDI) and network configurations ensures end-to-end visibility, consistency control and advanced automation. Additionally, our unique 360° DNS security solution protects data confidentiality and application access from anywhere at any time. Companies rely on us to help control the risks and reduce the complexity of challenges they face with modern key IT initiatives such as cloud applications, virtualization, and mobility. Institutions across a variety of industries and government sectors worldwide rely on our offerings to assure business continuity, reduce operating costs and increase the management efficiency of their network and security teams.

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