

## NICE gets more for less with hSo's converged networks

**NICE** National Institute for Health and Care Excellence



NICE's key role in UK health and social care demands a resilient communications network.

### At a glance

#### Challenge

- Move an office to a larger site
- Integrate both offices
- Upgrade whole network
- Reduce faults & downtime
- Enhance communication
- Create advanced DR system

#### Solution

- MPLS WAN with QoS
- Resilience from carrier diversity
- High bandwidth
- SIP trunks replace ISDN30
- Cost-saving video conferencing

#### Benefits

- £100,000+ savings
- "Undetectable" switchover
- Reliable data, voice and video
- Reduced staff travel
- Future-proofed network
- Business Continuity assurance

### Why they used hSo

Since its inception in 1999, NICE (The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) had employed the consultancy Inspired Networks to design and help maintain its networks and IT platforms. Inspired Networks are an independent services-only consultancy (they do not re-sell products), specialising in designing, maintaining and operating cost-effective networks in highly secure environments. Their particular expertise in the healthcare and financial services markets made them an ideal choice for NICE.

NICE commissioned Inspired Networks to find the most suitable supplier for its latest needs. Graham Walmsley, Managing Director of Inspired Networks, chose hSo over four other bids. He explained: "...they were the only company to listen to our requirements and come back with a bespoke solution that exactly matched our needs... furthermore, they were more cost effective".

**"As a government funded body, we're acutely aware of the need to secure value from all our suppliers. hSo has given us significant savings while providing a scalable, resilient communications network."**

Ben Bennett, Director of Business Planning and Resources at NICE

## Challenge

NICE (The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) is a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) which provides guidance and advice to improve the UK's health and social care.

NICE had offices in London and Manchester. Due to significant expansion and a need for an in-house call centre, it had to move the Manchester office to larger premises. It was an opportunity to enhance its entire communications network.

Five key points were set out in the initial brief:

- Integration – to run both offices as one despite their distant locations
- Scalability – to prevent growth from necessitating yet more network investment
- Resilience – to minimise disruptive faults (e.g. there had recently been an outage in Manchester)
- Enhanced communication – to enable extensive video conferencing between offices
- Disaster Recovery – the new solution would be part of a greater DR plan.

**“We are delighted with the service we have received.”**

Ben Bennett, Director of Business Planning and Resources at NICE

## Solution

**hSo:CONNECT** delivered a versatile WAN using MPLS to provide flexible, scalable, connectivity between different sites. hSo supplied high-bandwidth circuits for all data traffic (including Internet access) at each site. For extra resilience, hSo also used some lower-cost backup circuits at both sites. Different network operators were used for each of the four circuits for further resilience.

**hSo:VOICE+** uses SIP trunking to carry all incoming and outgoing VoIP traffic over hSo's MPLS network, eliminating the need for ISDN30 circuits. This not only ensures resilience for all calls to and from NICE but also enables prioritisation, e.g. voice/video over standard web use. Incoming calls can be routed to either office, and inter-site calls can be transferred as easily as if coming into just one office. NICE retained a small number of ISDN30s as failovers in case of outage.

For video conferencing, previously NICE had three units requiring complex set-up whenever needed. It now has 14 conferencing suites at each site which together function as a single office, saving £20,000 in operating costs.

hSo's underlying infrastructure lets NICE switch seamlessly between primary and back-up circuits, helping ensure zero downtime. After extensive testing, NICE found the switchover to be “undetectable”.

## Benefits

hSo's services saved NICE over £100,000 across the project. Lower call costs, free site-to-site calls, reduced ISDN30 costs and substantial savings from video conferencing are just a few of the benefits. Furthermore, the increased use of video conferencing has led to savings from greatly reduced travel between the two sites.

Data and voice services are more robust thanks to MPLS and SIP technologies. Additional resilience is guaranteed through the two back-up circuits and the remaining ISDN30s. All of this contributes to NICE's Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity plans.

The whole solution is fully scalable which means that as NICE grows, its network can grow too – and without the fear of extra capital expenditure.

Ben Bennett from NICE concluded: “As a government-funded body, we're acutely aware of the need to secure value from all our suppliers. hSo's bespoke solution has given us significant savings while providing a scalable, resilient communications network. We are delighted with the service we have received.”

## About hSo

hSo is a carrier-independent network service provider. Our managed services span inter-site and Internet connectivity, telephony and data centre solutions, including cloud and virtualisation. To find out more, visit [www.hso.co.uk](http://www.hso.co.uk) or call us on **020 7847 4510**

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