

Delivering The Right Lan-Interconnect Solution

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Does your company have multiple sites in a metropolitan area? Do you require up to 100mbps of bandwidth to interconnect the local area network (LAN) between your offices? Do you have cumbersome application to be deployed? If so – what will deliver the services you need at the right price?

When presented with the dilemma of interconnecting multiple sites in the one organisation you will have a number of options that need to be considered. What applications are being deployed? How much bandwidth will be required? What is the most secure method of delivery? Do you want a once off purchase or annual ongoing rentals? Will it be serviced by the carrier or systems integration company?

You, the IT professional can deploy, manage and support multiple sites by implementing any of the following, Leased Line, VPN, Frame Relay, MPLS, or a wireless interconnect solutions. However will this deliver you true LAN-to-LAN capabilities achieving speeds of up to 100mb between sites uncontended. To date many companies would look to the mission critical applications such as Oracle and/or SAP and either deploy with very expensive ATM, Frame or leased line capacity with the assistance of thin client computing products such as Citrix or Microsoft Terminal server. In some cases this is ideal, yet if you require all the resources of the network to be available seamlessly as if they are on the same



floor you can avail of services and / or solutions that will deliver the services you need to drive your business forward.

The business drivers for such a solution will vary; however the following scenario could serve as an example:-

A financial institution with around 300 users locally has, like many organisations in this space merged with another firm with mutually beneficial business models. They quickly realise that the cost of relocating one office into the other building is not feasible and the alternative of relocating both companies into a new premises proves to be also not viable. The options to be evaluated are as follows: - they can achieve 33mbps of bandwidth for a relatively low investment if they implement Cisco's Aironet products achieving three 11mbit channels over 802.11b standard. The true output will be less than that due to distance and power constraints and also they may have way leave issues with existing landlords to allow for the antenna

required for the line of sight. This may also be ruled out for many companies who will not be in a position to achieve line of sight.

As mentioned a wireless solution may not be suitable for a number of reasons one of which will be not achieving a true managed bandwidth 100mbps LAN interconnect service with predefined SLA's in place. Colt Telecom's 'COLTLAN' link circuits are dedicated digital links providing unlimited usage between two or more customer locations. The COLT LAN Link provides high quality, cost effective, feasible solutions. *"This service is scalable from 2mbps up to 2GB locally and 100Mbps Ethernet speeds are available throughout Europe using SDH for resilience, we find that most of our customers are using these services for real time disk mirroring, back up and most notably disaster recovery".* said Gary Keogh – Managing Director of COLT Telecom.

Before embarking on such a task there are best practices to be followed; ultimately the planning for the same will ensure the success of your project. Make sure you identify the implications at the infrastructure layer and address security with care. No assumptions should be drawn as this may lead to disappointment and extra expenses. Bring the right team in to assist you when outlining the parameters of your requirements and establish a budget, quality of services and SLA's that your company expects.