

Company: Hotwire

Industry: Public Relations

“Our London IT department is the lynchpin of the European network. Urban Wimax provided us with new technology that works perfectly, enhanced our bandwidth and was affordable.”

Kalpesh Maisuria, IT executive, Hotwire.

The challenge: Going beyond reliable network back-up

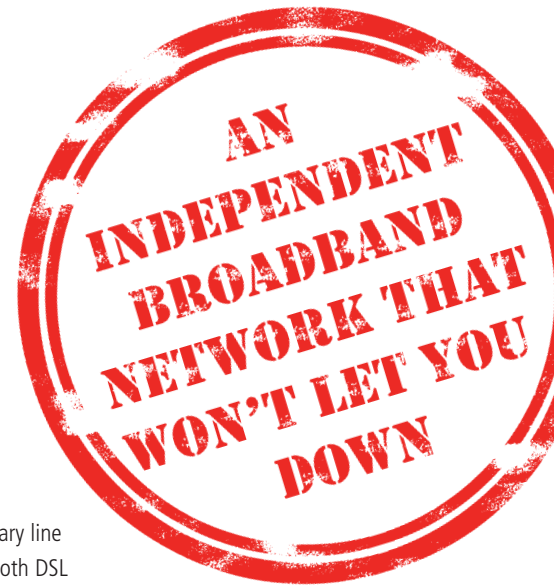
Hotwire is an international PR consultancy with its own offices in London, Paris, Frankfurt, Madrid and Milan, and works with an extensive network of other PR agencies around the world. It is a leading proponent of ‘next-generation PR’; making use of advances in technology to deliver innovative and strategic communications programmes to its clients, which include LogicaCMG, BlackBerry and Duracell.

The consultancy has six client practice areas focused on defined technology sectors: applications and services, consumer technology, digital media, enterprise and electronics, telecommunications and banking and finance. These focused practice groups ensure its PR teams have detailed knowledge of specific industry segments and strong relationships with journalists and analysts.

Hotwire centralises its support teams, including finance, HR and tech support. As well as providing a service for its UK staff, both in the office and remotely, the other European offices rely on the IT systems and support teams to provide email 24 hours a day. It would be fair to say London is the lynchpin of the IT operation, with central servers providing vital services for the entire European network.

Large files are constantly being transferred both internally and to and from clients. Their content ranges from slide presentations, brochure layouts and websites to lengthy white papers, proposals, high-resolution images and of course hundreds of thousands of emails.

For a number of years, Hotwire had been using a standard 2Mbps SDSL connection, relying on a 1Mbps ADSL connection for backup. The backup was never particularly fast as it was shared.



“Worse still,” recounts Kalpesh Maisuria, Hotwire’s IT executive,

“because both our primary line and our back-up were both DSL connections, they inevitably shared the same exchange, so if the problem was ever at the exchange, both connections would be affected.”

Another solution was required, one that could deliver a reliable, fast connection that was not dependent on the company’s local exchange, and would not cost a fortune.

Implementing Urban Wimax

The IT team at Hotwire did a large amount of technical research into the challenge, and soon became convinced that Urban Wimax technology could provide the diversity of connection, speed and economy that they were looking for. Urban Wimax offers a totally different kind of network that could guarantee all of these things.

Urban Wimax uses a ‘standards-based’ Wide Area Network technology that provides high-throughput broadband connections over long distances. It is an intelligent technology that supports many different types of application, from videoconferencing through remote access to web surfing, all at high level of service.

In fact, on contacting Urban Wimax, Maisuria was pleased to note that they could offer Hotwire a near 100% SLA (Service Level Agreement), virtually guaranteeing that there would never be a total service failure. “That was a pretty impressive offer, one we couldn’t ignore,” he says.

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After having extensive discussions with Urban Wimax, Maisuria took the decision to go ahead. Hotwire's technical details were faxed directly to the supplier, who then used mapping software to assess the capacity it could offer, depending on location and distance from the base station, without the need for an engineer to travel to the site. Using this software, Urban Wimax was able to offer Hotwire a 2Mbps symmetrical connection from a base station one kilometre away.

The survey was followed up by a site visit on a Friday, and the physical connection was installed the following week. Almost immediately, the whole connection was up and running. In fact, "Urban Wimax was prepared to install the antenna on the very day of their visit and could have done it if we had found the key to the roof at the time!" laughs Maisuria.

Once installed, the new system functioned perfectly in concert with the pre-existing SDSL. As a result, Hotwire now has a reliable, symmetrical and high-speed backup system to replace its 1Mbps ADSL line. Pleasingly, its costs are now lower, despite the improvement in the service.

According to Maisuria: "Since the installation, we have successfully installed a new firewall and router which work perfectly with both the cable and Urban Wimax connections. What is more, the Urban Wimax system is obviously flexible enough to evolve and adapt further, so we're looking into a number of exciting projects."

The agency's team is excited about the technology. Brendon Craigie, UK MD at Hotwire added, "Our office is regularly used for meetings between our clients and journalists or analysts. Having a high capacity network connection means we can provide the opportunity for them to demonstrate their technologies properly. We have one client already planning media briefings to show off their video conferencing service. A reliable symmetrical connection is crucial to be able to demonstrate that service at its best."

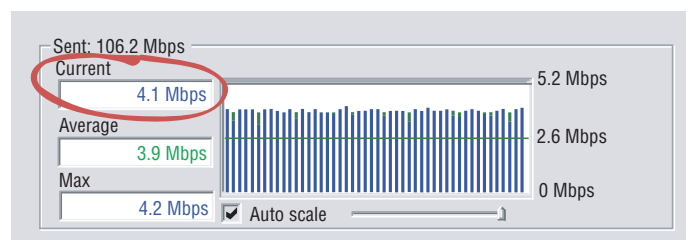
Future Plans

To date, the Urban Wimax connection has been a complete success, enabling Hotwire's London IT office to fulfil its vital role as the hub of the European network. As a result the team is looking to expand the system in new, exciting directions.

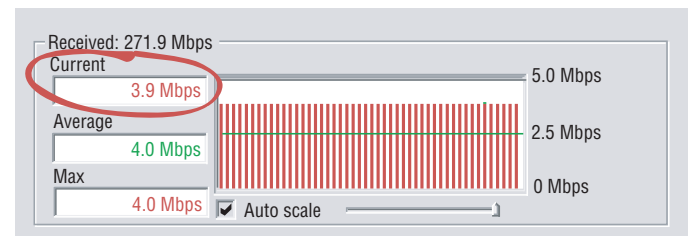
The company is investigating using a combination of Urban Wimax and Hotwire's original SDSL connection to enhance the available bandwidth. Currently, the Urban Wimax link is dedicated to backup, and so its bandwidth is only used when the other system is unavailable, but this could soon change with a combined 4Mbps service available to all Hotwire employees. "That way we can take full advantage of what Urban Wimax has to offer, without spending more. Now that it has proven its reliability it doesn't make sense to leave Urban Wimax only for back-up" says Maisuria.

The IT team is also looking into the possibility of using Urban Wimax for videoconferencing, perhaps going live next quarter.

Urban Wimax Independent Test Results



Download



Upload

Summary:

Key Benefits:

- Independence from the local exchange
- Greater bandwidth now available
- Possibilities to expand services
- Highly rapid, trouble-free deployment

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