

ProCurve Networking by HP

The NSW Institute of Sport



“NSW Institute of Sport staff members are in and out continuously. One moment they’re down at the track; the next, they’re back at their desk writing a report. The ProCurve network allows them to do that and still stay in touch. It is the best system we can get to support the members working in the very dynamic sport environment.”

Greg Baxter
Manager of Information, Communication
and Technology
NSWIS

Abstract

The NSW Institute of Sport (NSWIS) looks after almost 700 elite athletes who represent their state and Australia at the highest sporting levels, including the Olympic Games. The institute provides a wide range of services to these athletes, ranging from sports science physiology to coaching and training, career education, as well as personal and professional development.

Once in a lifetime

When NSWIS received a grant to move into a new state-of-the-art sports centre in Sydney Olympic Park, Greg Baxter, NSWIS Manager of Information, Communication and Technology, saw a golden opportunity. NSWIS could upgrade to a fully integrated next generation network - with VoIP, seamless identity management, and the latest video-based coaching tools.

"I see VoIP as the future, and that's why I decided to go with the VoIP solution," said Mr Baxter. "Sport is very dynamic; coaching methods change. It's critical that we can communicate with each other as well as possible, so our systems have to be the best we can get."

Selecting ProCurve

Mr Baxter received six proposals for the new network infrastructure. NSWIS examined each proposal in detail, including features, technical support, total cost of ownership over a five year period, and fit with NSWIS' current and future needs.

Some of the proposals seemed to lock NSWIS into working with just one vendor, but the submission from Essential Data + Voice (EDV), an Australian systems integrator, took the opposite approach. It designed a solution using best-of-breed components from a range of partners that supported open standards for VoIP and networking,

including Mitel, Microsoft and especially ProCurve Networking by HP.

The more vendors there are involved in a solution, the more parties NSWIS has to trust. However, NSWIS understood that this proposal was not just "best of breed", but also "best for them" - principally because of the time that EDV and ProCurve took to understand NSWIS and the challenges it faced.

Mr Baxter selected the EDV proposal, which consisted of ProCurve 5400 Series switches, ProCurve 420wl Wireless Access Points, ProCurve Manager Plus, ProCurve Identity Driven Manager, a VoIP system from Mitel, Live Communications Server and other software from Microsoft, and a range of professional services.

Going for gold

The close co-operation between NSWIS, EDV and ProCurve continued during the installation phase. At that point, NSWIS employed just two people who were responsible for IT - Mr Baxter and his assistant administrator. Fortunately, EDV and ProCurve and the other partners formed a virtual project team. Together, they were able to install, test and switch on both the network and the VoIP system in less than two days.

"Mitel, ProCurve and especially EDV key representatives became a part of that larger project team. They were basically working out of the NSWIS office for that period," said Mr Baxter. "It all went very well. The events I was told would happen actually did happen exactly the way I was told they would".

Today, NSWIS enjoys an integrated data, voice, video and wireless network, completely transforming how the organisation communicates.

The Ethernet network provides 1GB throughput to the desktop and 10GB uplinks to the edge switches. The wireless network securely extends well beyond the main administration building - to the competition and diving pool area of the Sydney Aquatic Centre, part of the grandstand of Sydney Athletic Centre, and the players' pitch at the International Hockey Field.

The entire network operation is orchestrated via ProCurve Manager Plus, while access rights for the coaches, athletes, visitors and staff are controlled via ProCurve Identity Driven Manager.

As a result, NSWIS experiences greater flexibility, performance, security and reliability from its network than ever before.

Flexible coaching; flexible communication

"NSW Institute of Sport staff members are in and out continuously. One moment they're down at the track; the next, they're back at their desk writing a report. Our dive and water polo coaches are by the pool from early in the morning, and the first thing they do when they arrive is load up their notebooks. Depending on the sport, our other coaches might arrive early in the morning and be gone in the afternoon, or come in the afternoon without training all morning," said Mr Baxter. "This system allows them to do that and still stay in touch."

The system can automatically redirect calls to mobile numbers. Soon it will be able to redirect them to wireless VoIP devices too. Staff can receive everything from voicemails to missed call notices via email. "That's a big plus; a lot of staff like that."

The system supports presence, meaning staff can see if colleagues are in meetings or otherwise busy before they attempt to contact them. They can even tag colleagues so they're notified when they become free again. The result: NSWIS staff can focus on their work rather than on trying to find people.

Mr Baxter said that many NSWIS staff dial into the network via VPN when they're working from home or travelling around the world, and they enjoy seamless access to the same features that are available to those working on-site.

Performance-boosting video

"Our coaches video and analyse everything - training sessions, sports science sessions, strength and conditioning sessions. It plays a big part in our coaching," said Mr Baxter. The institute even has a system that uses six infra-red cameras to video athletes at 2000 frames per second before generating an animated skeleton that can be viewed from any angle. "Our coaches will look for small differences in each athlete's movements that could indicate an injury that hasn't healed or an injury that could be about to happen," Mr Baxter explained.

With ProCurve switches, Gigabit Ethernet to the desktop and a high-performance wireless network, the staff of NSWIS can now access multiple DVD-quality video streams simultaneously without interruption, even at the pool, the stadium and the hockey field. "We have a lot of staff who run video continually. We have two terabytes of video at the moment and despite the fact that staff access the video streams continually, I have had no complaints about the quality or speed of playback," Mr Baxter said.

High-security sport

NSWIS can now dynamically deliver personalised user access policies based on industry-standard RADIUS (Remote Authentication Dial In User Service), with ProCurve Manager Plus and ProCurve Identity Driven Manager. These apply the appropriate secure access policy on-the-fly from a single policy store, regardless of whether the user connects via wired or wireless networks.

"Access policies at NSWIS are designed to be granular. For example, between peak hours anyone who's visiting can get internet access, whereas access to any of the student or staff systems is defined by NSWIS identity policy," said Mr Baxter. "If done right, users don't even see it."

Mr Baxter said this support for RADIUS identity management at the network access level was another reason NSWIS selected the ProCurve/EDV solution. "It has delivered on that promise, with no hiccups at all," he said.

Reliable results

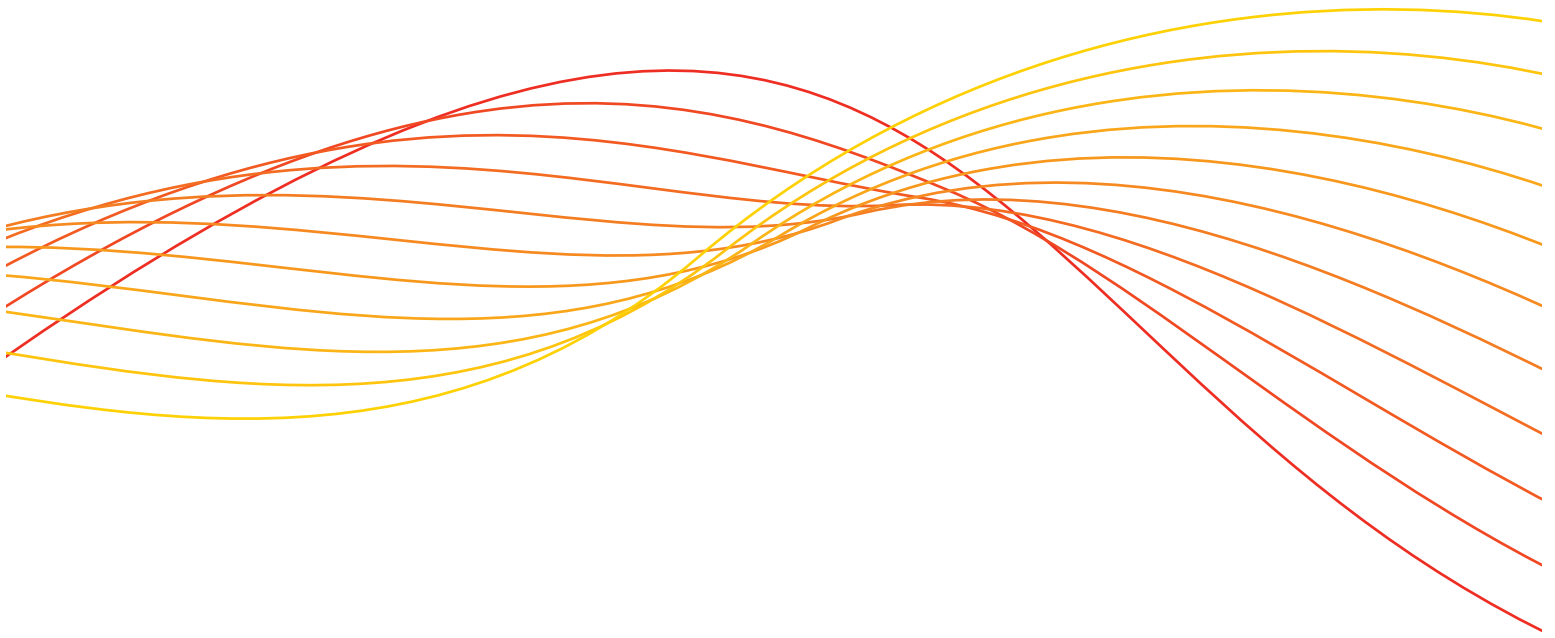
Before NSWIS installed the new system, network disruptions were a fact of life. When Mr Baxter rebuilt the network from the ground up, one of his goals was to turn network services into a utility - as easy to access as water flowing from a pipe. With the leap to VoIP telephony, reliability was more important than ever before.

Mr Baxter wanted to create a network and VoIP system that the athletes, coaching staff and senior management would not notice, any more than they'd notice and comment on the reliable supply of electricity. And this is exactly what he has today. The buzz is around the video, the presence and other advanced features, but not the network itself. Mr Baxter said of the network: "We're very happy with it. It does what it's supposed to do. I don't have to explain why it doesn't work or stops. It all works well, and you couldn't ask more than that."

ProCurve Networking by HP

The ProCurve Networking business unit of HP is a supplier of enterprise networking solutions comprising wired and wireless networking products, services and solutions - including WAN routers, Ethernet switches, routing switches, wireless access points and network management applications - which allow customers to build networks based on open standards that meet current and future needs for security, performance and reliability.

The ProCurve Networking Adaptive EDGE Architecture™ is a unique design strategy that creates a secure, mobile, multi-service network by placing intelligence at the edge - where users connect and policies are enforced. This innovative approach creates a dynamic network infrastructure designed to keep up with advancing technology and user needs while protecting business investments.



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