

Freightroute Distribution

NetPilot Case Study

For the last five years Freightroute Ltd have successfully utilised previous generation NetPilot products. When it came to enhancing and enlarging its network to improve inter-depot communications, Freightroute had no hesitation in deploying the latest generation NetPilot products at each of its depot sites. The results have not only been improved network connectivity and flexibility, but also provided the very latest in UTM network security.



Running a business with 140 vehicles on the road, from 8 depots across the UK, making 2200 collections and deliveries each day, requires excellent communication between the company's 285 staff and its many hundreds of customers.

Freightroute operates a UK nationwide delivery service for palletised goods, with their depots linked in a carefully planned night trucking operation. Many routes are covered by direct movements from one depot to another, enabling a fast, cost effective service, with minimal handling.

Founded in Northamptonshire and still retaining its HQ there, Freightroute was originally a family owned concern focused on parcel distribution. During the past ten years a network of other depots has been opened across the country at Thetford, Bradford, Durham, Falkirk, Wigan, Newport and Gloucester.

This expansion, in geographical coverage and numbers of depots, has meant IT infrastructure has had to keep pace. Freightroute Ltd turned to NetPilot's partner Datacrown, to design and implement the evolving IT and networking systems for both the HQ and depot sites. Datacrown, based at scenic Todmorden on the borders of Lancashire and Yorkshire, specialises in consultancy and deployment of network solutions.

To meet new business demands Freightroute have implemented web-based consignment tracking, which provides an easy-to-use interface to enable customers to view progress of deliveries. For this to work effectively, depot administration staff must be able to communicate effectively with the HQ servers and keep vehicle movement details up-to-date on a 24 x 7 basis. In addition they have contact with individual drivers via in-cab communications.

Freightroute's main servers are based at its Northamptonshire HQ, where the central NetPilot is located. Some 80 PCs are installed at this central location and the NetPilot not only acts as the gateway to the internet for email traffic, but also as the means of providing controlled browsing access for HQ staff.

Browsing profiles can be enabled for differing staff, or groups of staff, in particular departments.

NetPilots are at the heart of the company's security, providing a fully accredited firewall, as well as Unified Threat Management (UTM) protection. Freightroute have deployed options for scanning emails to detect viruses and other malware, as well as filtering out spam and Email Policy controls.

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The HQ NetPilot is also at the heart of the company's VPN (Virtual Private Network). To provide secure and efficient communication with each of the outlying depots, a company-wide, internet-based VPN has been implemented. Each broadband connected depot now has a new NetPilot installed, replacing the older NetPilot Remote. The new NetPilot not only enables secure, encrypted communications to the HQ site, but also implements a full repertoire of UTM security tasks as undertaken at the central site – it is especially designed for the needs of smaller communities of users, at branch offices.

Each depot can independently collect its mail and browse to the internet without passing through the HQ NetPilot, if required. Individual managers with laptop PCs can also connect to the corporate VPN when they are at home, travelling, or visiting depot locations. If there are special situations at particular depots, each NetPilot unit can be suitably configured to meet those local requirements.

“Controlling internet usage is something relatively new to Freightroute,” says Datacrown Managing Director, Tim Chamberlain. “One of the first things we did for them was to block Facebook. It seems to be a huge time-waster in any and every organisation with whom we have contact. We haven't gone overboard blocking many other sites for Freightroute but NetPilot enables the company to monitor exactly what is going on by depot, by PC and even by individual. Staff members are aware that monitoring of internet usage is happening. Freightroute are a 24 hour operation and in the small hours of the morning, once all useful tasks have been completed, checking out the latest sporting news is not something they want to prohibit!”

Of importance to Freightroute and reassurance for other potential users, is that all models of NetPilot have undergone rigorous independent testing by West Coast Labs and have been awarded Checkmark accreditation. NetPilot's firewall, VPN, Anti-virus, Anti-spam, UTM and Anti-spyware facilities, all have the same high levels of accreditation.

Despite its rapid growth over the last ten years, Freightroute has always believed that fulfilling customer requirements and expectations is paramount. Investing in IT, communications and networking infrastructure, to ensure it can meet increasing service demands and competition, is vital to its continued success.

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

- Corporate-wide security and VPN network
- Reliable and secure Depot to HQ communications
- Enables real-time updating of both vehicle and pallet movements
- Meets requirement for 24 x 7 uptime
- Controlled email and browsing environment for whole workforce
- Full UTM, Anti-spam and Anti-virus email scanning

***“We had no hesitation in choosing NetPilot units to enlarge and upgrade our network” Richard Bird
IT Manager Freightroute***