

AirSpeed Telecom helps United Drug deliver on rapid IT centralisation program

Consolidating three data centres around Ireland into its principal data centre in Dublin has been one of United Drug's most successful efficiency programs in recent years. The enabling network from AirSpeed Telecom, delivered in half the time of a traditional fibre network to meet internal deadlines, has been a key factor in the program's success.

The underlying network, provided by AirSpeed Telecom, connects United Drug's Dublin, Ballina and Limerick offices to each other at 100 Mb per second, up from just 2 Mb per second previously. Noel McGwynne, Group IT Department Project Manager for United Drug, said upgrading the speed of the existing low-bandwidth leased lines to the regional offices wasn't his only concern – there also had to be significant in-built resilience.

“Previously, we didn't have heavy data traffic among our sites, and each site was also independently resilient. But the environment changed after we centralised our IT: if there was a single line between the sites and that went down, those sites would be inoperative,” said Noel. *“If any of our sites go off-line, it's not just a financial loss, there's a human impact: United Drug offers a critical service, delivering pharmaceuticals to hospitals, pharmacies and in some cases directly to patients.”*

AirSpeed delivers for United Drug

Recognising United Drug's need for rapid rollout, AirSpeed rapidly provisioned the new network, bringing the first site online within one week and escalating the wider programme to deliver connectivity to all sites within six weeks.

The complete rollout was finished in half the time of a typical fibre network rollout and was vital in allowing United Drug to meet internal commitments.

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The finished network has now equipped each United Drug site in Ireland with dual redundant 100 Mb per second links: a licensed wireless connection from AirSpeed and fibre from a second supplier. Automatic failover between the two circuits offers guaranteed protection of network uptime for the business.

Originally installed as the second resilient connection, the AirSpeed links have now been nominated as the default active circuit between Ballina and Dublin, and between Limerick and Dublin.

Real benefits for United Drug

Noel says the centralised IT infrastructure, and a fully redundant network providing dual 100 Mb per second connections to all offices, has delivered a number of benefits:

- elimination of the ongoing cost centres of IT located in regional data centres
- reduced travel and engineering time as infrastructure is no longer distributed
- better communication among all offices, supporting the increasing volume of orders passed between regional and central offices
- automatic failover for seamless continuity between both 100 Mb per second lines
- responsive, customer-focused service from AirSpeed

Noel says the reliable customer service and open communication of AirSpeed is important in helping him deliver on his commitments to the business.

“What we want from our communications partners is flexibility,” Noel said. “That means timely delivery of orders, and continuously keeping me informed of where things are, the status of open projects and orders, and whether they’re keeping to timelines. With AirSpeed, I know they will always respond and they’ll deliver what they say they will; that makes life so much easier.”

United Drug Overview

United Drug is a leading international healthcare services company; its Irish business includes large pharmaceutical packaging and distribution operations.

The Need

- Centralise IT infrastructure supported by a new, resilient, high-speed network among its sites in Ireland

The Solution

- Dual 100 Mbps links between Dublin, Limerick and Ballina
- Automatic failover between links for guaranteed network uptime

The Benefits

- Reduced costs
- Reduced travel and engineering time
- Excellent communications between offices to support order and fulfilment
- Automatic failover for guaranteed uptime