



Netloan case study: PC booking and Wi-Fi access at Wakefield Libraries

Wakefield District Council in West Yorkshire has 13 local libraries, with a total of 260 public access PCs on the People's Network. The method for managing PC access and data reporting required improvement across the service. Sue Eustace, Assistant Library Manager liaised with Lorensbergs regarding the library service moving to netloan for PC session management and Wi-Fi authentication.

PC management in some libraries was causing inefficiencies in the use of staff time due to issues with the PC booking software previously in use. The remaining libraries used only a paper-based method, with a sign-in sheet which required staff supervision, and also required some intervention to ensure fair access to PCs and for general library management.

Wakefield council used a tender procurement process to select a new PC booking system to cover their key 12 branches that required improved PC management. The new system was also required to manage Wi-Fi authentication and reporting as part of the project, including the ability to facilitate tiered filtering for adult and child library users and to provide management data.

Choosing netloan

Wakefield selected netloan based on the scope and quality of its functionality as well as the value for money that it represented. Throughout the process, Lorensbergs was found to be responsive, professional and efficient at keeping the project team updated.

"Working with Lorensbergs as we changed PC booking system was brilliant," comments Sue. "It's been a very good relationship, very professional and always a quick response to any questions or service calls."

Since installation of netloan, computer session control has become much easier for staff, with sessions now being automatically implemented and managed, avoiding the need for paperwork and ensuring fair access.

"Netloan makes it easier for customers to get on to PCs, flags up when they need to get ready to finish their session and save their work, and then logs them off automatically. Even in smaller branches with lower PC use, it avoids the need to ask users to finish their sessions at closing time. It just makes life a lot easier for staff."

Adding flexibility to PC access management

Wakefield Libraries operate a two-hour session policy, after which time users need to ask staff if they can override the restriction to allow them to have more time on the computer. This is easily achieved using the netloan booking wizard feature, which allows staff to quickly override the initial time allowance. Until this point, access is completely self-service, with users walking up to the PCs and logging on using their membership number and PIN code. Users are clearly informed about the amount of time that they have left to use on their PC, with reminders to save their work in plenty of time before they are automatically logged off.

At present, staff discretion for session extensions is working well. Netloan also offers an automated session extension feature which includes user notification of any additional time available on the PC and manages the whole process. Wakefield may activate this functionality in the future to bring added self-service and flexibility to how PCs are used.

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The future working with Lorensbergs

Across Wakefield’s branches, PC use is reported to be steady and remains an essential resource for library users alongside the improved Wi-Fi provision. The need for efficient PC management continues, especially as some library branches’ PC use is heavily oversubscribed. Demand for PC and Wi-Fi facilities is anticipated to rise for small businesses, who are being encouraged by the Council to use local libraries to help get established. The arrival of refugees and asylum seekers has also already increased usage in some areas.

Advance bookings for PCs is being introduced using the netloan PC reservation functionality, with the link to the netloan booking calendar included on the Wakefield Libraries’ webpage. This will help users to secure the sessions they require for certain days or times. It will also enable users to secure time on a preferred terminal within the library. *“Some people like to come in on certain days,”* comments Sue, *“And sometimes they prefer to use the same computer, and to guarantee having access at a particular time. This will be useful in some branches where the computers get oversubscribed. In Wakefield Library for example this will be used a lot.”*

The library authority is looking forward to working with Lorensbergs as service policies develop and new services are introduced. Both the netloan charging module for introducing some fees for PC use, and the netloan Wi-Fi printing module are on the roadmap as part of library development and management.

Conclusion

Sue is happy to recommend Lorensbergs and the netloan portfolio to other library authorities.

“Staff feedback has been that netloan is far simpler to use than the previous PC booking software. All libraries have really adapted to using netloan and there haven’t been any issues at all.

“Netloan is a good value for money product, easy for customers and staff to navigate, and comes with good customer service from installation to support. I wouldn’t hesitate in choosing Lorensbergs again.”

With thanks to Sue Eustace at Wakefield Libraries.

To find out more, contact lorensbergs on **01992 415505**

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