



Linkages Edition 12 - Telecommunications subproject (Frequently Asked Questions)

A general telecommunications "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) has been drafted to provide Councils with more details about the telecommunications subproject. This FAQ is provided for reference below, and is also available from the telecommunications page of the LCC website at www.linkingcouncils.com. For further information or to ask additional questions about this project, please contact Matthew Hill (9268 4569).

1. Who owns the gateway?

Once the gateway machine is installed and commissioned it is the property of the respective Council. Consequently, considerations such as insurance become the responsibility of the Council.

2. Is it possible to have the gateway machine and centrally Managed Services (MS) installed without upgrading the telecommunications Carrier Service (CS)?

Yes. The gateway machine and centrally managed services are designed to operate with most common telecommunications carrier services. However, Councils are encouraged to subscribe to a minimum level of carrier service or bandwidth in order to obtain the full benefits of the online services project.

3. Can more than one Council site participate and benefit from the LCC Telecommunications project?

Yes. The project provides for the purchase and installation of one gateway machine, centrally managed services, and carrier service upgrade. Additional sites will require that the Council pay for the purchase and installation of the gateway machine, centrally managed services, and carrier service upgrade as necessary.

4. Virus protection is offered by the central mail server. Does the Council require virus protection on each desktop?

The project offers email virus scanning on all inbound and outbound emails sent through the central mail server. Virus protection is highly recommended on each desktop as viruses can enter a network through the use of Laptop computers, floppy disks, and potentially through browsing the Internet.

5. What operational cost advantages does the gateway machine offer over existing proxy and mail server products?

The gateway machine and centrally managed services are monitored and administered by highly skilled and experienced personnel. Security issues are identified and addressed uniformly across all sites. Internal proxy and mail servers require regular updating, typically by external contractors, to ensure that security vulnerabilities are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner. Failure to maintain internal servers can result in the security of the local network being compromised leaving sensitive information exposed to the outside world.

6. What services are offered by the centrally managed services in conjunction with the gateway machine?

- Web based Council administrator interface for user email and Internet access administration.
- Central mail server.
- Virus scanning of all inbound and outbound emails.
- Secure email between participating sites
- Webmail interface and email archiving for Councils not using an internal mail server.
- Domain management tools for the Council domain (council.wa.gov.au).

7. What assistance is available in respect to the gateway machines?

The general day to day administration and maintenance of the gateway is performed as part of the managed service. Further, the LCC help desk (helpdesk@linkingcouncils.com) is available to assist the Councils to address any issues in regards to the centrally managed services, gateway machines, and carrier services.

8. What are the advantages of using the central mail server over an internal mail server?

- * The central mail server is securely located.
- * All emails are routinely archived to protect against data loss.
- * The central mail server is regularly maintained and updated.
- * User administration is achieved through a web interface.

9. Is there a restriction on the number of users and unique email addressees that the council can use?

No, the Council can create as many users with unique email addresses as required. In addition there is the ability to have alias email addresses redirected to any number of internal and external email addresses. For example, ceo@council.wa.gov.au can be redirected to first@council.wa.gov.au and info@council.wa.gov.au. If the CEO changes the alias is updated to allow the email to be redirected to the new CEO email address.

10. What is an alias email address?

An alias email address allows a common email address (eg. ceo@council.wa.gov.au) to be redirected to any number of unique email addresses (eg. ceo.full.name@council.wa.gov.au).

This would allow all email to the common email address to be redirected to the records department inbox and the ceo's personal inbox. It is possible for the system administrator to create mailing lists using similar techniques.

Please turn over for further information.





11. Is it possible to connect from a remote site to the administration site using a standard telephone line?

Yes. A server inside the Council can be configured to accept incoming calls on a modem, with a maximum connection rate of 33 kbps. The LCC Telecommunications subproject does not include these configurations.

12. What user information is provided on the gateway machine?

Real time statistics are provided for the utilisation of the Internet connection, latency (response time), and web browsing usage. This is useful in determining network congestion, patterns of Internet usage, and excessive or inappropriate usage by individuals.

13. Is Internet Content Filtering available?

Yes, and this could be beneficial to Council productivity as the Council administrator will have the ability to restrict access to websites on a user group access list. The gateway machine provides Internet content filtering through user groups with web based configuration of Internet access settings.

Content filtering allows the Council administrator to review the Internet usage information to remove problem websites as required. Each user is assigned to one of the following user group

- * Unrestricted Access - Access any website
- * Blacklisted Access - Access any, except restricted, website.
- * Whitelisted Access - Access only specified websites.
- * No Access - No Internet access.

14. What use is a 64 kbps ISDN service when I already have a 56 kbps dialup modem?

The performance of the Internet connection is determined by the speed at which data can be moved, and the time required to establish the connection to move the data. ISDN has a typical response time of 30 to 40 ms, whereas a dialup modem has a response time of 300 to 400 ms (150 ms under ideal conditions).

A dialup connection requires 270 ms longer than ISDN for each round trip between the PC and Internet server. In 270 ms an ISDN connection could download or upload 2.16 kB of data. As each object downloaded from the Internet requires at least three round trips to establish the downloading of the object, an ISDN connection would be able to download 6.48 kB in the extra response time of a dialup modem. As most webpages contain many small files, the response time is important to overall performance.

An ISDN connection has a download speed of 64 kbps and a dialup connection has a download speed of 56 kbps maximum (typically 48 to 50 kbps). ISDN is at least 14% (typically 28% to 33%) faster than a dialup connection. An ISDN connection has an upload speed of 64 kbps and a dialup connection has a download speed of 33 kbps

maximum (typically 28.8 to 30 kbps). ISDN is at least 94% (typically 113% to 122%) faster than a dialup connection.

An ISDN connection responds 10 times sooner, downloads at least 1.14 faster, and uploads at least 1.94 times faster than a dialup connection.

15. If the Council implements an ISDN service for Internet connectivity and a more effective broadband solution is made available in the future can the Council change the Internet connection?

Yes in nearly all cases. The gateway was developed to be compatible with as many Internet connection technologies as possible. New Internet connection technologies can be integrated as they become available. The only consideration for Councils will be the length of commitment to the original carrier service.

Live Council Websites Update

The following Councils have now had their websites developed as part of the Linking Councils and Communities (LCC) Program. If you would like to view these websites, the first be developed as part of the Program, please visit the sites below:

- Town of Port Hedland - www.porthedland.wa.gov.au
- Shire of Dundas - www.dundas.wa.gov.au
- Shire of Dowerin - www.dowerin.wa.gov.au
- Shire of Exmouth - www.exmouth.wa.gov.au
- Shire of Chittering - www.chittering.wa.gov.au
- Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes - www.bridgetown.wa.gov.au
- Shire of Carnarvon - www.carnarvon.wa.gov.au
- Shire of Wyalkatchem - www.wyalkatchem.wa.gov.au
- Shire of Dandaragan - www.dandaragan.wa.gov.au
- Shire of Wandering - www.wandering.wa.gov.au
- Shire of Three Springs - www.threesprings.wa.gov.au
- Shire of Kent - www.kent.wa.gov.au
- Shire of Corrigin - www.corrigin.wa.gov.au

An additional 40 websites are also in various stages of development as part of the LCC Program and we will advise as soon as these sites go live.