

# How technology transformed productivity for a global Christian charity



## Better technology boosts morale and productivity for the people and volunteers of this global charity built on the foundations of Christianity.

For more than 150 years, our customer has been helping people in need. Since its founding in the East End of London, it has helped more than 13,000 in the UK into employment and supported 11,000 victims of modern slavery in the UK.

## Supporting staff and volunteers with the right tools

Today, the Christian based charity, is active in virtually every corner of the world. It serves in more than 130 countries: offering God's hope and love to all those in need without discrimination. It works in local communities to provide support for the elderly, young people and family reconciliation and hosts 50,000 worshippers every week at its UK churches or corps.

Yet the systems in place in its approx. 700 UK offices and churches were failing the people and volunteers around the country who help deliver on its mission. By 2021, network performance was so poor, there was a constant struggle to even use common applications such as Microsoft Teams.

The problems were affecting productivity, limiting collaboration, and impacting morale. Some locations were implementing shadow IT to meet their needs. They knew it needed to upgrade its network to deliver a new WAN and SD-WAN solution to all its churches, corps offices and community halls.

## Choosing to work with CAE

Following a formal tender process, the organisation chose to work with CAE to deliver the necessary improvements. As a charity, they were cautious about spending money and highly focused on getting value from any investment. At the same time, it wanted a high-performance, modern network design that would be fit for the future.

To meet these ambitions, we worked closely with our customer to design a suitable and trusted solution. The design took a three-tier approach to WAN:

- > Tier A: For data centre and headquarters; dual leased line with dual redundancy.
- > Tier B: Leased line with broadband backup.
- > Tier C: Broadband, no backup.

**Meraki SD-WAN was selected because it offered all the functionality required to meet the customer's needs at a great price point. With rapid provisioning thanks to a 'plug and play' zero-touch approach, the solution offered the right scalability and ease of management. The security approach and the 24/7 monitoring we offered were also key advantages.**



## A better solution at a lower cost

The deployment began in 2022 with an initial pilot of ten UK locations. The charity immediately saw massive performance and reliability improvements at those pilot locations.

Previously, packet loss had been high, with peaks as high as 17 percent. Following the implementation of the solution, testing showed packet loss to have fallen to two percent – a vast improvement.

Further, DNS latency showed a 50 percent improvement and external http latency improved by 70 percent with the new service. These improved speeds and reliability have improved the everyday experience for the people and volunteers of our customer; creating more good days.

**Previously unusable apps, such as Microsoft Teams, can be used with confidence, fostering greater collaboration throughout the organisation. The improvements are positively impacting the culture of the organisation. Easing technology frustrations is great for morale and collaboration. It's also paid dividends in the approach to innovation. The charity are looking at new ways to innovate, such as tracking church attendance and recognising trends.**

## A solution for the future

With the successful pilot behind it, the global church charity are now working with CAE to roll out the WAN and Meraki SD-WAN to its 800 UK locations. The new system is easy to roll out, it can be provisioned in minutes with zero touch. Security settings are simple to synchronise and Auto VPN technology enables the IT team to securely connect new offices in a few clicks using the Meraki dashboard.

CAE manages the WAN on their behalf, delivering on clear service level agreements (SLAs). Our monitoring enables a proactive approach to network management and troubleshooting, assuring the network performance. With the provided dashboards and 24/7 monitoring, this gives visibility into performance as it never had before, so it can be sure its local teams have the service and connectivity they need.

In addition, CAE manages the network software updates schedules, helping to eliminate vulnerabilities and ensure the highest security. Inbuilt security tools make it possible to synchronise security settings across the network and the Auto VPN technology enables the IT team to securely connect offices via the Meraki dashboard.

Following the successful delivery of the WAN and SD-WAN projects, they have further commissioned CAE to deploy additional tools: Umbrella, an SD-WAN connector which makes it simple to deploy cloud security across your SD-WAN fabric with only a few clicks; and Remote Worker, which connects remote workers to a data centre or multi-cloud IaaS resources with encrypted Auto VPN in three clicks.

Our customer, now has the right basis for effective connectivity throughout its UK organisation, eliminating the need for shadow IT with a highly effective and reliable service. Employees and volunteers have been impressed by the new solution, and the charity's cost sensitivity has also been addressed. The previous, incumbent solution was four times the cost of the new CAE solution. The new WAN has delivered a 75 percent cost saving back to the organisation. This way, its funds can be better directed to delivering on its mission.

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