

The Telkonet iWire System™

Samlesbury Hall, UK



Type of building	Multi-purpose venue with antique store
Location	Lancashire, UK
Year built	1325
Number of buildings	Two
Number of floors	Two
No. of rooms	14, including function rooms, restaurant, offices and antique showrooms
Telkonet installation date	August 2006

Challenge

To find a single solution that would provide broadband Internet access through the site, plus inter-office networking between buildings, without disturbing the fabric of the historic architecture.

Samlesbury Hall, a 14th century multi-purpose venue located near Preston in Lancashire, North West England, had very specific criteria when seeking a broadband access solution for its historic site. The venue is administered by a charity, the Samlesbury Hall Trust, which needed to establish data networking between offices in two separate buildings, in addition to high-speed access for promotion, website maintenance and office usage.

The Hall is hired out for weddings, private functions and conferences, with a restaurant that also hosts themed banquets and provides catering for the function bookings. Samlesbury Hall also houses a busy antiques centre with seven showrooms, attracting a thousand visitors per week. The centre handles antique sales direct to the public and to dealers, organises regular auctions, and needed to have a faster way of sending high-quality images of individual antiques and auction lots to prospective customers. Having broadband access in all office areas was an essential part of the project, while conference bookings were also increasingly dependent on the Hall being able to offer broadband facilities to delegates.

Samlesbury Hall's manager Sharon Jones contacted the Lancashire Digital Development Agency (LDDA) for advice about broadband and its related technologies, via her local Business Link service. The LDDA provides free and impartial advice about the business benefits of broadband to companies across Lancashire.

Richard Hughes, the LDDA's e-envoy, explained: "This project presented an interesting set of challenges, mostly due to the Hall's layout and construction. The building's walls are over 2 metres (6' 6") thick in places, ruling out wireless options, which might otherwise have been the obvious choice. The viability of wireless was further compromised by the lead content of the windows. A site-wide CAT 5 network would have proved uneconomic and, given the Hall's historic status, this was not an alternative, as the inevitable disturbance to the fabric of the building would have been unacceptable.

"With wireless and CAT 5 out of the picture, the alternatives were somewhat limited. However, my colleague Neil Callow was aware of Telkonet's system, which uses a site's existing electrical wiring to distribute data and high-speed Internet access. We explored this further, and it sounded the ideal solution. Samlesbury Hall's office networking and broadband access requirements could both be solved by simply harnessing the building's already-installed power circuits. When we came to it, Telkonet's iWire System represented the only viable technology for the Grade 1 Listed buildings."

“Without their help, we would still be stuck with our 14th century problem and not have the impressive benefits of our 21st century solution!”

Sharon Jones, Manager, Samlesbury Hall

Solution

Avoid damaging the building’s fabric by installing the Telkonet iWire System™, to utilise the existing electrical wiring for inter-building networking and for broadband Internet access throughout the site.

The LDDA contacted Telkonet’s UK specialist, Systemax Communications, who visited Samlesbury Hall to conduct a site survey. This confirmed that the Telkonet iWire System would meet all the Hall’s requirements, and a demonstration was arranged for Sharon Jones and her team. The demonstration proved convincing, and following further technical advice from Neil Callow at the LDDA, Systemax Communications supplied and installed the system.

Stacey Evans, the company’s UK Sales Manager, outlined the task: “The installation proved very fast, being completed within a few hours, once a power cable had been run from the Hall’s main fuse board to the antique centre in the other building. This was run and fixed unobtrusively, to ensure both buildings were on the same power circuit. This simple solution resulted in broadband access being available throughout both buildings, with all the Trust’s computers connected to the same network.

Telkonet’s very straightforward solution uses just three main building blocks – the Telkonet Gateway, which receives the broadband feed; the Telkonet Coupler that connects into the power distribution board, and the Telkonet iBridge™ interface units. The latter can be plugged in to any power



socket, to provide high-speed Internet or data networking access. The Telkonet iWire System proved ideal for this project – quick to install, extremely cost-effective, and inherently scalable.”

Samlesbury Hall’s Sharon Jones sees nothing but benefits from installing the Telkonet system: “Particularly for the antiques side of our activities, it was vital for us to have broadband access from all our administrative areas. It enables us to organise on-line valuations, and have all our auction lots on display, whether or not the articles are physically at Samlesbury Hall. The solution that Systemax Communications installed has also taken us into a new era in terms of our computer network. All our machines are now on the same network, and we don’t have to run between the buildings in the rain to transfer data manually! We are also able to satisfy event managers that their conference delegates and presenters will have broadband access.

“It still amazes me that simply plugging a Telkonet iBridge into any power socket gives you instant Internet! We are very pleased indeed with the results of the system, and with the help and advice we received from Richard and Neil at the LDDA, and from all the team at Systemax. Without their help, we would still be stuck with our 14th century problem and not have the impressive benefits of our 21st century solution!”

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