

The Telkonet iWire System™

Norfolk Royale Hotel, English Rose Hotels
Bournemouth, UK



Type of building	Hotel
Location	Bournemouth, UK
Year built	1840, became a hotel in 1890
Number of buildings	1 building
Number of floors	3 floors
Number of rooms	95 guest, 15 conference
Telkonet installation date	October 2005

Challenge

To provide secure high speed Internet access throughout the premises, with minimal disruption, and without affecting a recently completed refurbishment program.

Part of the English Rose Hotels group, which operates 9 hotels across the UK, the Norfolk Royale Hotel dates from 1840 and holds an important place in the architectural heritage of Bournemouth, one of the country's largest south coast resorts. Owned for a time during the 19th century by the 15th Duke of Norfolk, it still carries the Norfolk family crest on the front facade.

During 2005, Clive Moss, General Manager of the hotel, took the decision to evaluate a number of options for in-room Internet access to meet the growing demand from guests and conference clients. The selected solution had to meet several criteria, including capital cost, data security and the need to minimise any disruption during the installation. The results of this evaluation process would also allow the Norfolk Royale to act as a pilot project for English Rose Hotels, enabling the chosen technology to be proven before applying it to other venues in the chain.

Clive Moss explained: "We are a busy conference hotel, and broadband was an absolute must. It was imperative for us to find a solution that would encompass all of our guest rooms, as well as our conference suites and public areas. An important factor was that we had relatively recently

completed the refurbishment of the hotel's entire third floor, and we were very reluctant to risk disturbing or damaging the décor by re-cabling with CAT 5. We did consider WiFi, but I was reluctant to take that route – we've all experienced difficulties with reliability and one cannot ignore the security issues, and so when Systemax Communications showed us the Telkonet iWire System, we felt this was by far the best-fit solution for us. It gave us the hard-wired security we much preferred and, as it uses a building's existing electrical wiring, there would be no new cabling or disruption to worry about."

Given the hotel's level of conference and seminar business, which includes hosting a number of training courses, an additional requirement was the ability to set up secure networks in the conference area quickly and easily.

Solution

A comprehensive, integrated data access solution that utilises the Telkonet PLC system as a flexible backbone to provide secure, hard-wire data access throughout the building, together with WiFi connectivity in selected areas.

The Norfolk Royale's evaluation process of Internet access alternatives began during late summer 2005, with the equipment being installed in October following a successful demonstration that underlined the system benefits. Systemax Communications, a UK reseller, installed the Telkonet iWire

“A fast, secure and competitive result – we are very pleased with the whole installation.”

Clive Moss, General Manager
Norfolk Royale Hotel

System in one working day, with the whole process being completed within three days. Telkonet’s solution consists of a set of simple to install building blocks, comprising a Telkonet Gateway that connects via a router to an external ADSL feed (in this case, a 2Mb connection supplied by UK national operator BT), and a Telkonet Coupler that interfaces with a building’s electrical distribution panel.

Typically, an electrician is only required on site for an hour or so to wire the connection between the Telkonet Coupler and a hotel’s distribution panel. Having made this connection, an entire building’s power outlets become Internet and data access ports. Individual Telkonet iBridge™ units plug into the power outlets and provide the link to laptops or desktops, delivering the Internet connection via a computer’s Ethernet port. At the Norfolk Royale Hotel, each of the 95 guest rooms is equipped with a Telkonet iBridge – with Ethernet cable and instructions – giving any guest easy access to a secure Internet connection. Systemax also installed a ZyXel 1200 billing platform, which allows the front desk to monitor guest usage, and provides the installer with remote access for reliability monitoring and to keep a check on the legality of websites being visited by guests.

A particular benefit of the Telkonet system is that a building’s power circuits are transformed into a communications backbone, from which an array of IP devices can be operated – ranging from WiFi points to surveillance cameras and IP phones. This ability is used to good effect in the Norfolk Royale, with Telkonet iBridge units being used to drive WiFi access points in the lounge and other public areas, including the hotel’s conference facilities.

Clive Moss commented further: “If a seminar or training-course client is concerned about security, and would prefer not to use the WiFi facilities, then we can simply issue Telkonet iBridge units to the delegates and trainers, to establish a secure network that suits their requirements. The ability to plug a Telkonet iBridge into any electrical outlet in the building gives us great flexibility, and provides us with the potential for open-ended expansion to cope with future requirements. To add a further IP device to the Telkonet backbone, we simply hook in another Telkonet iBridge as necessary, and with no additional wiring needed, this can be achieved anytime with the absolute minimum of delay. Overall, the system has given us a fast, secure and competitive result – we are very pleased with the whole installation.”

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