Paxton's Net2 access control protects staff and students across Perth and Kinross County

Established in 1996 in the heart of Perth, Perth & Kinross Council has a pupil population of approximately 17,500 and responsibility for 10 secondary schools, 76 primary schools, one school for children with special needs, one pre-school centre and 45 nursery classes.

Over the last ten years, security has become increasingly vital in schools to protect students, staff and assets, while also allowing students to move freely around a site. In 2009, Perth & Kinross Council began a five year phased replacement of their initial security system, switching out their basic standalone access control with Net2, Paxton's market leading networked security system.

Scott Bruce, Facilities Management Officer at the council, has been in charge of the replacement. The five year security project has been based on guidelines from the Cullen report, an inquiry into the safety of children in schools following the Dunblane tragedy in March, 1996.

Scott said: "The findings of the Cullen report required all schools to provide a safe and secure environment for students and staff. We want to enhance, upgrade and centralise the security of our schools to ensure we meet these requirements. The Net2 system gives us the benefit of an audit trail so we can see who has gone where and when, across all our sites."

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Perth & Kinross Council enlisted the help of local installation company, Scottish Communications, to help them with the project and install their new access control system.

Stuart Leslie, Sales Engineer for Scottish Communications, said: "Perth & Kinross council needed a networked security solution to provide and control access to schools across the county that could be managed from their head offices in Perth. Paxton's Net2 system met the requirements perfectly and provided a cost effective solution, so important in the education sector."

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Scottish Communications have fitted Net2 plus single door access control units with Net2 Pro software to secure the main doors to 32 schools, 11 private council offices and Perth's main library in the town centre. Sites include the Perth Academy, Perth High School, Oakbank and Viewlands Primary School. Net2 plus, Paxton's most powerful control unit, comes with onboard TCP/IP and plugs directly into the network. Perth and Kinross use Net2 plus to connect all the schools and council buildings to one network and control the system centrally from the council's head office.

Scott now manages the Net2 system on a daily basis and makes important administrative changes in Net2 Pro, to the school system as a whole. School holidays, time zones and department

options can be logged centrally in the Net2 software which saves time for each school managing this individually.

Scott has set the Net2 system to alert him if someone tries to open a door without permission or use a token that is already barred from the system. He uses report monitoring in the software to ensure the school sites are safe from intrusion.

The council also use the Card Designer program in Net2 Pro software to design and issue all their staff with access cards that double up as ID cards.

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Scott says: "The Net2 Card Designer program is so easy to use – it took our admin assistant less than half an hour to learn and now we have professionally designed ID cards for all council staff. We even have plans to use it to design the students' bus passes. Like the Net2 software itself, the program takes minutes to administer."

Other future plans for the site include using Paxton's Net2 Caller ID reader to secure access to some of the council's more remote school sites. The Net2 Caller ID reader allows you to unlock a door from anywhere, using your mobile phone as a key. You simply call the number assigned to the reader when you want to access the site.

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Scott says: "This is an ideal solution for when maintenance contractors need to visit schools and we can't necessarily get out to the site to let them in. There's nothing worse than getting a call out to go and carry out checks at a school only to turn up and find it all locked up. If it's an out of hours call-out the contractor may not remember to bring a specific set of keys but will more than likely have his phone on him."

Perth & Kinross Council is very happy with the way the Net2 system is working. Having centralised control is a huge bonus, giving them an additional layer of control and flexibility to manage the system round the clock.

Scott says: "The Net2 system looks simple and is simple to use, but there's a level of complexity behind it which meets our needs for more advanced security. It's easy to learn, meaning that we can solve any issues quickly, rarely have to ask for help and save money on maintenance!"