

D-Link/Lanarena Case Study

Who are Lanarena?

Lanarena run the UK's largest LAN gaming and Internet centres. Founded in December 1999, Lanarena have six centres located in Megabowl entertainment complexes across the country, with plans to increase to ten venues by the end of the year.

Lanarena aim to offer an unrivalled gaming experience, not just through the location and facilities on offer, but through the quality of their service.

Lanarena have forged a reputation in the gaming industry for the reliability and high speed of their gaming platform. This network is powered by D-Link networking products.

The Challenge

As nice as it may sound playing games all day is difficult work. These games are very graphic intensive requiring a lot of bandwidth. The games themselves need to be played at speed as players characters need to be able to react to an opponents moves in real time.

Lanarena had a very clear picture of the hardware vendor they were looking for - "we were looking for a 100 percent network provider with a recognisable brand name and unrivalled service levels," explained Dominic Mulroy, Managing Director of Lanarena. Lanarena were adamant that they did not want a network supplier - they wanted to work with a manufacturer. "We needed to know the company would value the association of their brand in a public environment," said Mulroy.

D-Link answered the call, this was the challenge Lanarena set: to provide them with networking equipment that would combine high performance with outstanding reliability and position Lanarena as the best LANgaming company

in the business. With a very clear objective, D-Link was only too pleased to tackle this project and knew they could provide the total solution.

The Solution

D-Link supplied Lanarena with their 100MB network solution. Each of Lanarena's six venues located in Nottingham, Bristol, Leicester, London, Gateshead and Maidenhead now have 32 PC's linked using the D-Link solution.

Every site has 32 DFE-530TX network cards and 2 DES-3225G switches. Both these products are ideally suited to Lanarena's needs. The DFE-530TX is a high 10/100 Mbps specification adapter. The device transfers data directly to and from the hosts' memory so that less pressure is placed on the host CPU. This is excellent for Lanarena as it means the CPU can get on with the difficult job of processing all those high-speed graphics.

The DES-3225G Gigabit switch gives maximum performance and functionality at an affordable price. The high port density and scalability of the device are a useful feature of the product. Should Lanarena decide to add more PCs in the future they are able to at minimum cost. The DES-3225G also benefits from a back plane speed of 10.66 Gbps allowing a rapid connection between the PCs and the servers.

Continued Success

D-Link was involved with Lanarena from the start of their business in 1999 and since then Lanarena has seen constant growth. Lanarena now provides a range of services to a host of different customers including games publishers and corporate gaming for promotional events.

Lanarena also hosts national tournaments as they are now the UK's largest gaming chains. "Lanarena is ahead of the field as far as our technology goes,"

said Mulroy, “we have been recognised by the industry as a leading gaming company,” he added. This recognition means Lanarena have staged several high profile events most notably the official PC Gamer Unreal Tournament with a £5000 cash prize. “Such high profile events are only possible if there is a strong, fast network in place,” commented Mulroy. One of the founders of Lanarena now holds the Chair of the Video Games Association (VGA), the body which governs most of the gaming leagues and tournaments throughout the country.

Summary

Lanarena is a company that has experienced a great deal of success since its fairly recent inception. The company has become a driving force in its market and has risen to become the market leader in this field. They have done this through their reputation for quality - a reputation based on a D-Link network.

The company is continuing to expand with plans to open several more venues around the country in the near future. Present venues are set to be linked via leased line to allow inter venue competition. D-Link has joined AMD, Sennheiser, Videologic and Saitek as sponsorship partners of Lanarena and ties between the two companies are strong.

Looking back at the choice of D-Link does Dominic Mulroy have any comments? “Our image is second to none, the D-Link networks have had a 100 percent record over 18 months with not one failure. Quality equipment ensured that the venues are running 24 hours a day at full performance,” Mulroy said.

“The network at Lanarena required products that could withstand the huge content, speed and user demands placed upon it,” said Dion Luyk, General Manger, UK, Eire & Benelux, D-Link (Europe). “D-Link products have vividly demonstrated they have the versatility, flexibility, durability and reliability to operate in the most taxing of environments.”