IP FABRIC

IP Fabric
UHMBT - University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust

With IP Fabric, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust can proactively assure their network is up to task and able to support the Trust's aim to provide quality healthcare services.

ipfabric.io

IP Fabric | NHS

Network

NHS Trust's IT teams
supports 5 hospitals

Locations

South Cumbria and
North Lancashire

About UHMBT

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust (UHMBT) is an NHS Trust organization in the Morecambe Bay area of Northwest England, which spans South Cumbria and North Lancashire. The Trusts' IT support teams provide services to NHS Staff across 5 hospitals, approximately 50 General Practitioner sites and a variety of other community services buildings throughout the region.
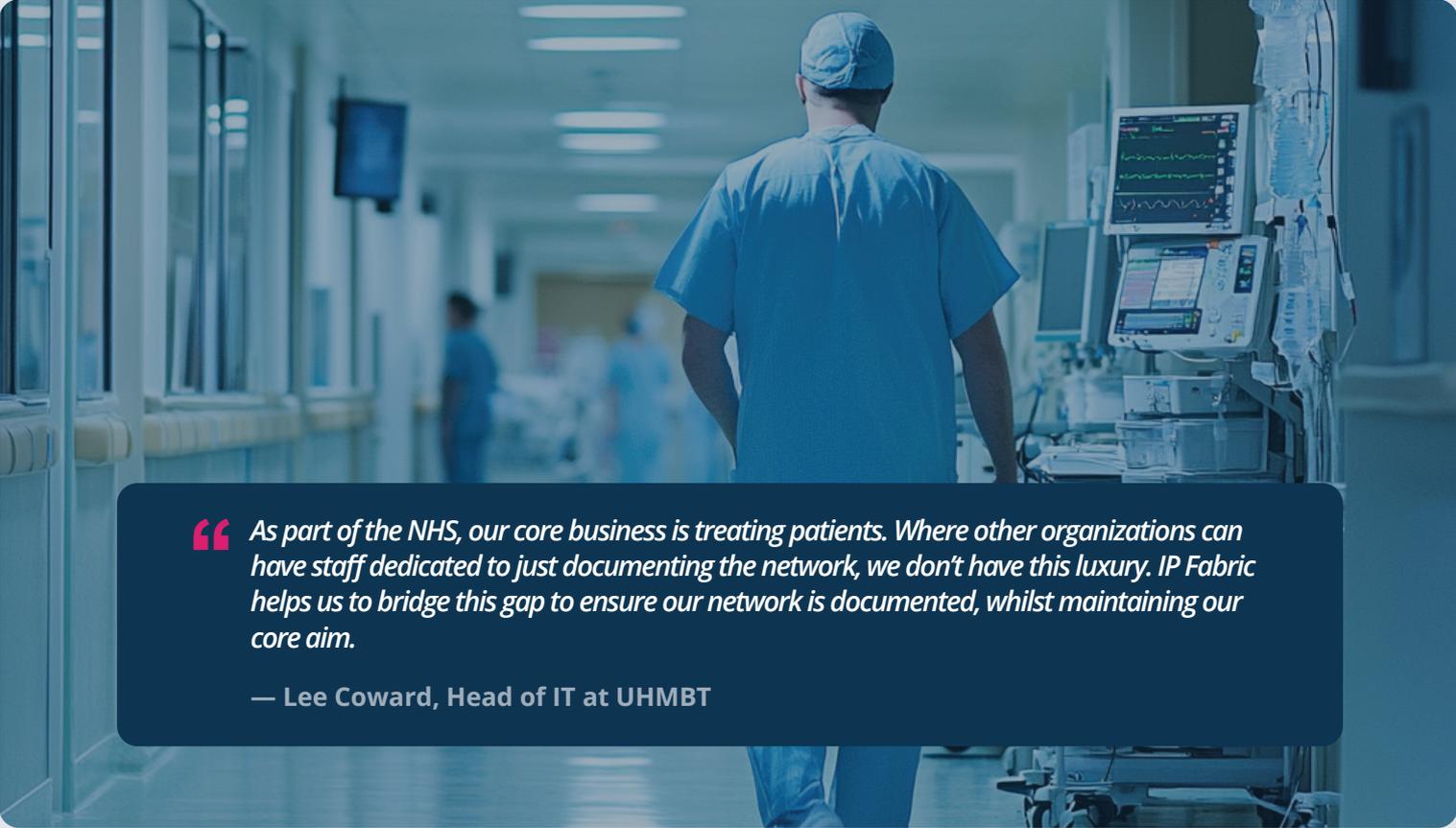
> *As part of the NHS, our core business is treating patients. Where other organizations can have staff dedicated to just documenting the network, we don't have this luxury. IP Fabric helps us to bridge this gap to ensure our network is documented, whilst maintaining our core aim.*
>
> **— Lee Coward, Head of IT at UHMBT**

Challenge

Troubleshooting without the road trip!

Given Morecambe Bay's location spans a large part of the Lake District in the UK, the area that the UHMBT IT Team are responsible for managing is dissected by lakes and mountains which can render travel time considerably longer than usual. For troubleshooting network issues on-site, this can cause quite a few issues:

> *It felt like we had to be there at the time a problem happened. Our sites are spread across 900 square miles, so it can take over an hour to get on-site when a problem is reported.*
>
> **— Lee Coward, Head of IT at UHMBT**

Solution

IP Fabric has helped reduce detection times and provided a different means for Lee and the UHMBT team to detect issues. They have even been able to address lingering issues that otherwise would have gone unresolved:

> *4 or 5 years ago, we changed DHCP servers, but we could see from DHCP timings that they weren't optimal and had high response times. Some of the network was still connected to the old DHCP servers. We never had time to troubleshoot the whole problem. After one discovery session with IP Fabric, we had everything presented in a dashboard and found non-compliant DHCP servers without having to log onto every device individually. This would have taken us days otherwise.*
>
> **— Lee Coward, Head of IT at UHMBT**

Now, whenever UHMBT's networking team need to investigate, for example, MAC addresses or switches, they can easily access this information without first having to spend hours on the road to hopefully encounter the issue on-site.

Benefits

→ Drastically reduced time taken to ascertain root-cause of issues

→ Able to address lingering issues previously unresolved due to time restraints

→ Able to create dashboard overviews in shorter timeframes

→ Ease of use

Challenge

Accurate documentation to ease compliance concerns

Given the critical nature of the services provided by UHMBT, their network must remain compliant with governance frameworks at all times. To guarantee this, they need a consistently accurate and up-to-date view of their network.

Before IP Fabric, The Network team had a library of documentation that they updated manually. Quite often however, they would not be able to regularly keep this up, which led to outdated documentation, and potential bumps in the road when preparing for an audit – even if the network had not changed, providing an auditor with a network schema with a reviewed timestamp would result in having to duplicate that schema.

Solution

UHMBT are now able to obtain up-to-date network topologies with minimal manual effort. When preparing for an audit, they are able to produce overviews with much quicker turnaround and avoid duplicating their efforts due to outdated timestamps.

When the team make a change, they can quickly validate changes through scheduled post-change automated snapshots of their network to ensure the network matches what they intended – all leading to smoother audits.

Benefits

→ Consistently up to date documentation

→ Reduced manual effort in gathering relevant information

→ Faster change validation to ensure no deviation from intended network state

→ Reduced risk of human error in documentation submitted for audits

Challenge

Simplifying projects from planning to implementation

UHMBT have to juggle the need to ensure critical services in the region remain optimized with the need to update their network. Running refresh and reset projects previously required the team to sift through often inaccurate manual network documentation and configurations to first understand what was needed, and where. Currently, they are running two important projects:

1 **A LAN refresh project**

2 **A wireless access point replacement program**

Solution

1 **LAN refresh:** IP Fabric has allowed UHMBT, in cooperation with one of IP Fabric's strategic partners, to gather data required for low-level design in this project. The third party engineer responsible for the low-level design has been able to easily retrieve the information that they need, including most importantly, sanitized configurations. These sanitized configurations, stripped of sensitive encrypted data, are made available without having to provide network access to the third party engineer.

> " *From a governance perspective, this is very helpful. Even though the third party is trusted, there is still one less awkward question to answer as to why a non-NHS employee needs access to our network when we can simply give them sanitized configurations without having to let them directly into the network*

2 **Wireless access replacement:** UHMBT are also running a program to replace over 1,000 wireless access points. Instead of manually planning switches on-site, IP Fabric expedites this process by providing comprehensive network information, including asset details, which has allowed the project manager, themselves not a technical network engineer, to both easily understand the network and plan out the AP replacements.

Benefits

→ Increased self-sufficiency for project members due to accessible data

→ Reduced security risk from third party project participants

→ Post-project assurance around implementation success

→ Faster ramp-up to understanding the network

> *Three words on IP Fabric: Efficiency. Assurance. Troubleshooting.*
>
> **— Lee Coward, Head of IT at UHMBT**

About IP Fabric

IP Fabric is a vendor-neutral network assurance platform that automates the holistic discovery, verification, visualization, and documentation of large-scale enterprise networks, reducing the associated costs and required resources whilst improving security and efficiency.

It supports your engineering and operations teams, underpinning migration and transformation projects. IP Fabric will revolutionize how you approach network visibility and assurance, security assurance, automation, multi-cloud networking, and trouble resolution.

Don't take our word for it

See how assurance can transform your approach to network management.

Access the demo

IP FABRIC
AUTOMATED NETWORK ASSURANCE PLATFORM

Support & Documentation
https://docs.ipfabric.io

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