

COMMITMENT TO QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Our long-standing experience in challenging industrial environments enabled us to plan a migration that balanced robust testing with a minimal maintenance window.

Delivering a seamless transition and preserving operational integrity was our top priority.

Lee Hiscott (MD, Toranet)

EXTREME WING → CLOUD XIQ MIGRATION

Part 1 – Migrating the wireless network & clients

About the Client



Unipres is a high-quality manufacturer of pressed and assembled steel automotive parts. Using hot and cold presses up to 3000 tonnes, as well as over 400 robot assembly facilities and over 800 staff.

The wide variety of working environments, office and production, presses and robotics, as well as the products manufactured and stored on the factory floor create a very challenging environment for wired and especially wireless networking, which is required to be 100% reliable and available everywhere.

About Toranet



Toranet is an Extreme Networks trusted and recommended partner with very strong expertise in wireless networking, especially in challenging environments such as manufacturing and warehousing, retail and hospitality. Toranet has many years of knowledge and experience in planning, deploying, evaluating, diagnosing and supporting wired & wireless networks in such environments.

Toranet has often been engaged to design and install such solutions and is often recommended to diagnose and resolve issues in existing wireless solutions and has never failed to resolve all discovered issues and deliver to expectations.

The original deployment

Originally using Motorola/Zebra WiNG wireless, the existing deployment was enhanced and optimised by Toranet over several years due to the normal and expected types of evolutionary change in the working environment and has been actively supported ever since the first engagement.

Additional components have been added during the life of the solution, such as customised self-service portals for guests and secure on-boarding requirements.

The need for change

The WiNG product range was acquired by Extreme Networks and actively developed with new hardware and software features since this acquisition.

The cloud-centric development of Extreme Networks wired and wireless portfolio "Extreme Cloud IQ" (XIQ) is not directly supported by the existing WiNG hardware and the end-of-support date for this hardware was set for the end of 2026.

Therefore, some form of replacement would be inevitable, but with a priority to maintain the same proven stability, reliability and performance which had been provided by the WiNG solution.



The Client's View: "One of the biggest decisions Unipres had to make was to either stick with Extreme or migrate to a different vendor, namely Meraki. We had tested some Meraki equipment and although we were happy with the performance and functionality could it co-exist with Extreme during the migration? This is where we rely on the expertise of Toranet. The advice they provide is backed with years of experience across multiple sectors. They highlighted the potential risks and sold the Extreme solution to us, through demonstrating its capabilities which were equal if not superior to the Meraki offering."

Andy Furness (Unipres IT/Operations Manager)

CHALLENGES

The organisation has very few maintenance windows, and therefore change control opportunities are limited in frequency and duration.

A "big-bang" replacement would therefore present significant risk to production, from many technical aspects, not least of which might be compatibility with the existing vast and varied client devices and the services they require.

Changing hardware and software and therefore delivering a brand-new configuration would entail many changes at one time and in one step and therefore present a high risk to production continuity, so how could that be avoided?

Planning and execution process

"Every manufacturing environment has its unique challenges. With Unipres, we knew that a "big bang" replacement wasn't an option. Our one change at a time strategy allowed us to upgrade the wireless network incrementally, ensuring full compatibility with all client devices and minimising risk."

Lee Hiscott (MD, Toranet)

UPGRADE STRATEGIES

The Extreme Wireless WiNG solution has long proved itself to be very reliable and stable, so Toranet developed a number of steps which meant that the upgrade could be achieved in a managed and low-risk way, so as to ensure the best-practice approach of "only one change at a time" and maintain the client's high confidence in the wireless services.



This was delivered in suitably sized steps maintaining this prudent and low-risk policy.

Augmentation of the existing deployment was also possible in managed steps to ensure continuity and maintain reliability and connectivity, continuing to prioritise minimal risk at every stage, both to production and user perception.

Extensive live and parallel testing for compatibility and configuration confirmed all the detailed configuration optimising was resolved before any changes were made.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

The primary challenge was the risk associated with the large scale of change, which was overcome using incremental step-changes with extensive preparatory and post-change testing criteria, ensuring that every step was successful.

For continuity with the existing essential functions, Toranet custom-built a guest portal mechanism using the extremely capable, customisable and multi-faceted Guest Essentials, to suit the branding and features required by the client.

After some use, the client found that they required some extra features which were not available from the considerable capabilities of Guest Essentials - despite its extensive toolbox and features - and so Toranet added its' own developments to further enhance the sponsored guest access and provide the increased features needed by the client.

THE OUTCOME

The conversion was planned and prepared so as to minimise the required changes in each step – and so minimising risk. Therefore, the single annual maintenance window could be used most efficiently, with fully successful in-depth testing of all solution aspects such as connectivity, reliability, coverage and many others.

The client now has a new hardware and software wireless platform, which involved minimal significant down time to achieve, and provides all of the previous features and functions, as well as better management and diagnostic visibility.

The Extreme Networks XIQ platform has also paved the way for management of the non-Extreme switch infrastructure, more of that to follow in Part 2.

Extreme Networks XIQ provides many new functions and features, such as a customisable Guest Portal sub-system, Private Pre-Shared-Keys (unique to each client device), and AI/ML to assist in diagnosing and resolving any issues which might arise. Extreme will be extending their AI capabilities for the XIQ platform in 2025 for simpler issue resolution and better insights.

Many of these features have been used since the upgrade to manageably migrate the client base to more efficient configuration options, providing improved security, and more efficient wireless environment throughout the organisation, with a clear roadmap for other efficiency and performance improvements in the near future.

Delivering Value and Innovation: "We're proud to offer solutions that not only meet today's demands but also pave the way for tomorrow's innovations. The migration to Extreme Networks XIQ has provided Unipres with enhanced management, diagnostic visibility, and the advanced security features needed for their complex operational environment."

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