



## **LAMBETH COLLEGE ACHIEVES TOP MARKS WITH A DATA INFRASTRUCTURE FROM DAMOVO**

Lambeth College is undergoing a significant expansion over the next few years – and needed a data networking environment that could meet its ambitious growth targets. Damovo demonstrated that it could deliver voice and data expertise, when it was originally appointed to upgrade, install and maintain the College's LAN and WAN data infrastructure. Damovo's data experience impressed the College so much that it asked Damovo to design and manage a new state-of-the-art communications centre in the College's Clapham Centre.

Students and staff at Lambeth College are enjoying the benefits of using a more robust data network: higher performing applications and faster access to the Internet. With help from Damovo, the College has proven that it can more than meet the demands of students in the 21st century.

### **Building a communications platform for 21st century education**

Lambeth College is a large further education college based in South East London. 20,000 students enrol onto its courses each year and it employs around 800 staff. The college is located on four sites at Clapham, Brixton, Vauxhall and Streatham.

Lambeth College has a commitment to provide excellent quality in teaching and learning; promote equality and widen participation in education; deliver high levels of learner success; and meet the skills needs of the economy. To meet these objectives and offer students a modern, 21st century learning experience, the College has embarked on an ambitious £61m re-development of its sites at Brixton, Clapham and Vauxhall.

## ...MORE ROBUST, HIGHER PERFORMING AND WITH FASTER ACCESS TO INTERNET

The first phase involves the construction of a new sixth form building at the Clapham Centre, which will open its doors to students in 2009. There are also re-development plans for the Brixton Centre, which is focused primarily on business and IT learning, and the Vauxhall Centre, which houses the College's specialist vocational centre.

In line with its commitment to improving the learning experience and education facilities for students, in 2002 the College announced a strategy to upgrade its data network. The first phase, upgrading the core of the network, was completed in 2004. The College then prepared to embark on the second phase – an upgrade of the LAN infrastructure – involving the replacement of 90 Edge switches.

It was a problem that needed solving as soon as possible, because network performance was beginning to affect student and staff's ability to use the Internet and other applications at the College. **"It was such that if one switch failed in a stack, the whole stack failed; with a Cisco solution, we could have resilience built in to ensure continuity of service,"** explains Graeme Hill, Head of IT at Lambeth College.

### Calling in the data experts

Lambeth College decided to combine the project with an upgrade of the data connections between the College's four sites, and sent out a competitive tender to vendors for the upgrade, installation and maintenance of both infrastructures.

One of the communications providers asked to tender was Damovo, which has maintained and supported the College's MD110 voice platform for several years. Damovo had also undertaken some data-related projects for the College in recent months, so Hill **"had real confidence they could deliver."**

Damovo was chosen not just on the strength of its data credentials, but also its people and well-presented strategy. **"We've been working with Damovo on the voice side for many years,"** explains Hill. **"We realised that with the quality of support – and particularly the quality of technical resources that Damovo has at hand – they were going to be our preferred supplier to take our networking strategy forward."**

Lambeth College knew it wanted to change from a 3Com to Cisco data solution, but Damovo's recommendations stood out from other vendors **"because they were the most detailed and, therefore, the presentation we had the most confidence in,"** adds Hill. For the WAN upgrade, Damovo recommended the College upgrade to 100MBs data links, but to keep the voice circuits, which were functioning perfectly well.

**"...quality of support and particularly technical resources...made Damovo the preferred supplier to take our networking strategy forward"**



## DAMOVO CHOSEN FOR ITS DATA CREDENTIALS, PEOPLE AND WELL-PRESENTED STRATEGY

These two projects were implemented at the same time the College was undergoing the re-design of its main site in Clapham. Such was the College's confidence in Damovo's ability, it was appointed as the preferred supplier to design and install a brand new, state-of-the-art communications room at the new Clapham Centre.

Damovo allocated a project manager to oversee the work at Lambeth College. **"He was fantastic and led the project team,"** recalls Hill. **"It was good to have him there, as we had some issues with the inter-site links and he could act as focal point for these discussions."**

Hill also has nothing but the highest praise for Damovo's engineers and especially his own team, who worked closely with Damovo to make the project succeed. **"It was a tough project because obviously we were working on the basis that there would be no interruption to college business or services, so most of the work had to be done at weekends or in the evenings,"** he adds.

It also helped that Damovo was working across all three projects. **"The projects seemed to merge into one as we had the same project manager for the communications move and obviously the account manager has always been the same, which provided the glue to make sure everything was on track and all the suppliers were talking to one another,"** says Hill.

The new communications room went live at Easter this year. The MD110 voice system was moved over seamlessly at the beginning of the summer, and it was fully operational after one weekend of work.

As part of the data networking upgrade, the Ericsson MD110 was also upgraded to the latest MX-ONE switch, in order to offer IP functionality. The College has taken the decision to use IP



telephony at its Adare Centre in Streatham, which is the smallest site and, therefore, only had a single voice and data WAN link. During the WAN upgrade, Damovo recommended that the College used VoIP for this site, rather than incur the large expense of putting in a new cable. Remote IP extensions from the Clapham Centre provide local resilience to the Adare Centre.

**"This was something that came to light quite late in the project and in itself was a mini-project,"** admits Hill. **"But it was brilliantly executed: Damovo quickly provided a technical specification and had implemented it in a weekend."** Such was Hill's confidence in VoIP after this test case that the College is now planning to roll out VoIP to its new Sixth Form Centre at Clapham when it goes live, which Damovo will be designing once again.

**"...project manager and account manager provided the glue to make sure everything was on track and all the suppliers were talking to one another"**

## A NEW DATA NETWORK THAT STUDENTS AND STAFF CAN RELY ON

### A new data network that students and staff can rely on

Since implementing the new LAN and WAN environment, students and staff have seen an instant improvement in the performance of the Internet and business applications at the College. ***“The Internet is used massively by our students and with faster inter-site links they receive a much better service,”*** says Hill. ***“Also, staff at remote centres often used to struggle to receive decent connectivity with students grabbing bandwidth to use the Internet, but this has changed overnight. Our business applications are performing much better, so it has had a benefit for the performance of our organisation.”***

Damovo maintains the network for the College, but on a day-to-day management level, the new data network is easier for Hill and his team to handle because, ***“there are far fewer single points of failure; the network is much faster, more robust and reliable,”*** he says. Looking ahead, the College now has several options for upgrading its voice network, including migration to VoIP. Closer to home, the data network is also able to cope with any extra demands that may occur when the new build comes into operation.

***“I’d highly recommend the project management approach,”*** says Hill. ***“Damovo’s project manager planned the project meticulously with the team and we were able to benefit from that as an organisation in the way that the new solution was rolled out.”***

***“Damovo is now helping us with our strategy for the new building and although we’re working with different people – with the exception of the account manager – the quality is of the same high standard,”*** he continues. ***“It’s a big project and we are going to look to developing improvements at the other Centres, which we hope Damovo will be able to help us with.”***



***“...there are far fewer single points of failure; the network is much faster, more robust and reliable”***

#### Damovo UK Ltd

Broadlands Business Park, Langhurstwood Road,  
Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 4QP  
Tel: +44 (0) 1403 244 000 Fax: +44 (0) 1403 244 660  
Email: [talktous@damovo.com](mailto:talktous@damovo.com)  
[www.damovo.co.uk](http://www.damovo.co.uk)

**D A M O V O**