



ROEHAMPTON UNIVERSITY ACHIEVES FIRST CLASS COMMUNICATIONS SOLUTION

Working together with Global Services company, Damovo, the university implements Cisco Call Manager as an integral part of a ten year technology plan.

Set in beautiful parkland six miles from the heart of London, University of Surrey, Roehampton has over 7000 students studying a broad range of disciplines.

With the vision of being a university with an international reputation for teaching and research, a secure national presence and a distinctive local identity, Roehampton is committed to providing an academic service of the highest quality.

At the heart of any university is communication, and at Roehampton, the Information Services department

understood that in order to achieve the highest levels of service, they required a long term plan to implement effective communications across an industry standard network.

Developing Communications for the Future

Working with a traditional Ericsson analogue telephone system, without such things as voice mail or messaging, the IS department was very aware that the old technology was hampering effective communications and that the university had, in effect, outgrown it. The department had also spent over five years developing data systems using Cisco technology and was conscious that there were two distinct networks – one for data and one for voice.

Now was the time for convergence...

VOICE AND DATA TOGETHER FOR A TRUE CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS SOLUTION

Voice and data needed to be brought together as part of a true corporate communications solution. The university wanted to move forward in a way that would allow it to evolve and did not want to spend precious time and resources propping up old technologies for the sake of achieving short-term fixes.

With significant building and re-fitting work planned for the university it was perfect timing to investigate further into IP telephony and, in 2002, IT Director John Hill, together with his Network Manager met with Cisco to consider it as a solution. IP Telephony uses an IP data network to provide company-wide voice communications over a single voice and data network and offered significant potential to further capitalise on the existing data infrastructure development.

An Enabling Solution

Hill presented his findings and recommendations to the university and once he had received committee approval he began the task of finding the perfect partner to work with. Knowing that a bespoke solution would not be right for the university, in January 2003 Hill briefed a number of communications companies, including Damovo, a global communications services company which was supporting the Ericsson system.

One factor to have an enormous effect on any new solution to be implemented, was the announcement that a building, which housed part of the old Ericsson system and serving some 25 to 30% of the university's voice users, needed to be knocked down in July 2003.

“...Damovo responded very rapidly indeed, offering us not one but four possible solutions...”



COST EFFECTIVE WITH MINIMUM DISRUPTIONS



Unfazed by the tight deadlines, Damovo came up with an intelligent interpretation and, crucial to the success of the project, understood the structure of the university and what it required from a new telephone system.

“Professional enough to cope with the horrendous timeframes imposed, Damovo responded very rapidly indeed, offering us not one but four possible solutions,” enthused Hill.

With Damovo on board, and after careful consideration of its options, the university opted for the Cisco Call Manager solution. This offered the highest level of compatibility with the data network it had been developing and was clearly capable of evolving in tandem with changing university needs over time. It was also very important to the university that the chosen solution should cause minimum disruption and be very cost effective over the long term.

With a two week installation due to begin on the 1st August, the building demolition was temporarily delayed to give everyone involved a little more time for planning. A critical factor highlighted at an early stage was that the

new solution would need to be installed and up and running seamlessly so as not to interfere with one of the university’s busiest and most important times of the academic calendar – student clearing and registration during late August and early September.

The extra time given to the Damovo engineers allowed them to work closely with the university’s IS team to create a new hybrid solution with the new system and the old analogue system running alongside each other. The old legacy Ericsson system will be phased out over the next three years at which time all elements of the old analogue voice network will be redundant.

The installation took place over six weeks which allowed more time for testing and for the Damovo engineers to spend 1:1 time at the university, and was successfully installed without any disruption to essential university business activities.

“...professional enough to cope with horrendous timeframes...”

SOLUTIONS THAT SUIT INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

The university now has 250 IP telephony users rising to around 1,700 over a 3 year period.

Mobility

As part of the university's long term plan, the Damovo solution allows the IS department to add on communication tools as and when they are needed.

This together with the additional functionality of the new system has already begun to change some aspects in which university academic and support staff can choose to work, with new Voice Mail facility being hugely popular with users from the outset.

Staff office relocation is a constant factor in university life, particularly with the ongoing programme of building works and this is one of the first aspects of the new system to achieve immediate and potentially dramatic cost savings. Typically, the cost to re-jumper an extension on the old analogue system would be around £200. The 'follow-me' technology of the IP telephony system is virtually cost free, a benefit which is of course warmly welcomed by respective budget holders.

University staff are already at home with the new technology and appreciate the benefits Call Manager brings to their working life; as Hill commented, "If staff are being asked to move out of a building where the new IPT system has been installed one of their main objections is not having access to the new telephone facilities!"

Many senior managers don't have desktop PCs, preferring mobile technologies instead and as Hill explains, "We like to provide our users with solutions that suit their individual needs and we want to offer choice. Our role is one of enabling not constraining, if our user needs change then the technologies available should facilitate not hinder such changes."

Future Plans

With the first stage deployed, plans are now underway for Damovo to start work on stage two in May 2004.

But the communications revolution won't stop here – Roehampton University is keen to look into the possibility of utilising the new voice system across the academic Wide Area Network (JANet) to other similarly enabled universities.

**"...enabling not
constraining..."**

