



DAMOVO PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH ENHANCED STUDY CAPABILITIES

Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) is the largest such institute outside Dublin and as the sole higher education institution in the South East it provides education up to doctorate level to 6,400 full-time and 4,550 part-time students.

Providing a supportive learning environment for its students is central to WIT's ethos and the range and quality of student support services is excellent. Good quality housing is a priority and the Institute currently owns and/or manages sufficient very high quality student apartments to meet the demand.

To enhance the living conditions and study facilities of students, WIT administers a high-tech Manor Village accommodation complex in Waterford city, access to which is provided by means of the Institute's WITCard smart card system. One of the services provided to enhance study capabilities is Internet access to every study workstation in the complex.

WIT has invested in a controlled Internet access service from Damovo, the communications solutions and services provider, which integrates seamlessly with the WITCard system, to enable ease of use from both a management and student point of view.

The Manor Village complex has 500 individual bedrooms in three, four and five-person apartments. Each study workstation in the apartments is now cabled with Category 6 cable for Internet access which is currently achieved via a 2Mbit/s ADSL link. Damovo supplied the fully managed system that bonds multiple ADSL broadband connections into a seamless whole to provide the minimum contention ratio, i.e. to reduce congestion on the network caused by many people trying to use it at the same time, and thereby to provide optimum performance at all times.

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL WITCARD INTEGRATES VARIOUS APPLICATIONS ONTO A SINGLE CARD AND PROVIDES INTERNET ACCESS

Understanding Customer Requirements

"There are two major elements to the system that supports residential students in the educational and personal aspects of their years at WIT - the WITCard system that offers access and control over everything from building access to meals in the campus restaurant facilities, and secondly the high performance broadband Internet access," explains Eugene McKenna, general manager of campus services at the Institute. "We developed the WITCard system internally at the college but needed to look to a reliable supplier to ensure that we were complementing our system with the best possible internet facilities. Damovo fit the bill as the partner we could trust to provide that service."

McKenna continues: "We have reached the stage where the WIT campus is about 75% cash-less, developing towards an even more sophisticated model of the staff/student card systems that are becoming the norm in the USA and in many of our European partner countries. Internet access is bundled free to students with their rent while in residence, for example, but log-on is controlled by the WITCard. So is physical access to the building, the apartment and to each student's bedroom."

A Proven Model - Future Potential

Damovo recognised the need for the Internet access provision and the WITCard scheme to be separate from the main WIT network infrastructure for security reasons. Students and visitors access services or information through secure Web portals rather than having direct access to the campus Wide Area Network and administrative systems. Broadband Internet access is provided free with accommodation for full-time students, but the VNet managed system installed by Damovo allows for future variations in the service including charging for access either by time or by download volume or by a combination of the two. It could also, for example, increase the bandwidth service level to specific users. Similarly, expanding the total bandwidth available to the

overall user population is simply a matter of subscribing to further ADSL connections or moving over to alternative technologies such as DSL2, Metropolitan Area Network fibre, etc. Although the system currently provides for the WIT student accommodation, it could easily be extended to other campus locations through cabled connections or wireless access points. It is also now a proven model that could be readily applied in any campus-type situation or locations such as hotel and conference facilities or exhibition centres.

WITCard - Properties

The multi-functional WITCard integrates various applications onto a single card. These include: official student identification and accommodation access; library access and borrowing; printing, photocopying and point of sale payments to campus restaurants and vending machines. It can also be used for payments to an online sandwich bar from which sandwiches can be ordered in advance for later collection and which is soon to be supplemented by a 'create your own pizza' service.

"...a reliable supplier to ensure that we were complementing our system with the best possible internet services"



WIT HAS BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL SHOWCASE FOR CAMPUS CARD SYSTEMS

The card can also be used for payments in the campus shops and the fitness centre. Funds can be loaded to the WITCard online from any Laser or credit card account or direct from an AIB account through ATMs on campus and there is also a special 'cash to account' machine which can accept cash top-up payments. Checking the WITCard funds balance and keeping a record of all transactions is done online through a Web portal and PIN identification, which can be easily changed by the user or in the event of a lost or compromised card.

WITCard and Damovo - an award winning combination

The continuing development of the WITCard scheme and the technical advances which underpin it led to an award to Eugene McKenna from the US National Association of Campus Card Users when its 2004 annual Professional Development Award went to a non-USA institution for the first time ever. In 2002 WIT organised and hosted a European Card Conference and since then Eugene McKenna has been instrumental in the creation of the European Campus Card Association, formed to provide learning and networking opportunities for educational institutions across Europe. WIT has become an international showcase site for campus card systems, assisted by the fact that WIT is the national centre for smart card research and development.

The WITCard system can be used both by full-time students who spend about 38 weeks annually on campus and part-time students. **"It is a significant factor also in giving a satisfactory service to people attending conferences or short courses,"** says Eugene McKenna. **"High quality residential accommodation and services are important in attracting academic and other events. We can issue a WITCard to participants to cover their stay on campus, including secure access to their rooms and broadband Internet for the duration of their stay. It is easy to issue and administer, whether just for a couple of days or a longer stay."**



Integrating Internet access facilities on to the WITCard, which was carried out by Damovo required a knowledge of the capabilities of both systems, according to McKenna,

"Damovo fully understood the capabilities of the WITCard system and was able to tailor a solution that met with our requirements"

Damovo
Citylink Business Park
Old Naas Road, Dublin 12
Tel: 01 429 3000
Fax: 01 429 1259
Email: sales.ireland@damovo.com
www.damovo.ie

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