

City University London



University challenge

At a glance

With sites scattered over London, all on separate LANs, looked after by different companies, it was time for consolidation and improvements at City University London.

Organisation City University London

Industry sector Education

Location London

Challenge Around-the-clock access to IT and learning materials for staff and students.

Solution A fully-managed converged network.

Products Metro Ethernet VPN (Virtual Private Network).

Benefits 24/7 access to educational resources provided by a modern network capable of supporting current and future communication needs.

City University London had been growing rapidly, and so had its IT infrastructure, resulting in a series of separate networks scattered across London. Its LANs (Local Area Networks) were run by different operators, in buildings run as separate entities.

This left City quite vulnerable as it occasionally experienced loss of service whenever cables were accidentally cut by utility providers, and suffered local connectivity issues due to IT outages.

With its renowned international focus, there are now over 21,000 students to look after from over 150 different countries. Students study in a range of subjects covering arts (including journalism and music), informatics, social sciences, engineering and mathematical sciences, business, law, and community and health sciences.

As City continues to pursue academic excellence it needed a network to support this. It was time for change – time for a single company to take over – campus-wide. City was looking for one supplier to take responsibility for everything, from selecting the products involved, through to supplying the network itself.

It considered several options. Along with other companies, we were judged on value, flexibility and resilience. And based on that, our Metro Ethernet VPN was chosen as the most suitable solution.

“We now have a truly future-proof solution that provides the resilient, scalable network we need. It also lays the foundations for us to introduce new applications.”

Carl Stokes, Director of IT Operations and Infrastructure, City University London.

Today's demanding students.

Nowadays students expect 'anywhere, anytime' learning. They want immediate access to personal files or university resources via campus Wi-Fi or broadband connections in their rooms, 24 hours a day. For some part time and mature students, the only way learning is possible is by having access from home to fit in around their day jobs.

The only way to live up to these expectations, was to build a resilient, high-performance network that can cope with web-based education.

City's sites are now all hooked up, allowing staff and students uninterrupted access to a booming range of IT and educational resources – whenever they need them.

Key benefits

- A solution that is quick to install and get running, saving both time and money.
- Prioritised network traffic to avoid congestion and to keep virtual lectures from stalling.
- Remote buildings now operating as if they were within the main campus.
- Around-the-clock network monitoring and service guarantees.

One high-speed network.

To help with the procurement process, City used Buying Solutions (formerly OGCBuying.solutions), a non-profit government agency. It provides framework agreements for the public sector to bring about time and cost savings. As a pre-qualified supplier, we were able to help City cut down the buying process from six months to just three weeks.

Our Metro Ethernet VPN with its high capacity bandwidth was designed to support multimedia applications like video conferencing.

Now it not only enjoys bandwidth ranging from 10Mbit/s to 1Gbit/s, but also avoids congestion by prioritising critical traffic. So, for example, with staff and students based at different sites, virtual lectures no longer suffer from any time delay or stalling. Which all goes towards making everyone feel part of the main campus, even though they may not be on it.

Back up to the future.

City now benefits from other things too. The reassurance of a backup connection, should there be an unexpected outage along the main network. Plus, the ability to add new applications that just wouldn't have been possible before.

Future upgrade costs were all set out at the start, helping it with forecast budgets and planning for change in the future.



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