



RSPCA

Investing in advanced **Cisco AVVID** technology and **Cisco IP Telephony** solutions to **increase efficiency** and minimise costs, thereby **maximising funds available** for animal protection and welfare.

Executive Summary

Background- The RSPCA is the oldest animal protection society in the world and is a major force for animal welfare in England and Wales today, with 1,500 paid staff, and more than 180 affiliated branches.

Challenge- The RSPCA was looking for an advanced high performance telecommunications solution which would support modernisation and allow integrated voice and data applications.

Solution- The RSPCA chose Cisco AVVID architecture and Cisco IP Telephony technology to create a unified enterprise-wide voice and data network infrastructure which enables advanced converged telecommunication applications such as unified messaging, virtual contact centres, call prioritisation and interactive voice recognition.

Results - The RSPCA is significantly reducing its costs while at the same time increasing efficiency, thereby maximising its service to the public and to animals at risk.

Services



Cisco IP solution for the RSPCA is one of the most sophisticated in the UK

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - the RSPCA - was founded in 1824, as the SPCA: the first national animal protection organisation in the world. With 1,500 paid staff, including 328 uniformed RSPCA inspectors and 146 animal collection officers in England and Wales, as well as a network of more than 180 affiliated branches, the RSPCA is a major force for animal welfare today.

The RSPCA's activities include animal rescue, animal welfare education for schools and youth organisations, advising government on animal welfare legislation, and initiating animal welfare projects in other countries.

A million enquiries a year

Each year, the RSPCA receives approximately one million enquiries: by phone, email and via its website. And every 20 seconds, the charity receives a call from someone somewhere in England or Wales.

Handling such large volumes of work depends on efficient communications across all the charity's sites: the main Headquarters, the 10 regional headquarters and call centres, animal hospitals and animal welfare centres.



An advanced telecommunications solution

When the RSPCA decided to relocate its 400-strong Headquarters team to new purpose-built offices in Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex, this provided the ideal opportunity to modernise the charity's telecommunications capabilities.

The private branch exchange (PBX) telephony system in the previous headquarters was 15 years old and needed updating. However, the RSPCA decided against another PBX system. 'As a charity, we depend on the generosity of the public, so we need to make our investments wisely,' explains Matt Winckless, Technical Communications Manager at the RSPCA. 'Staying with PBX would have meant building two cabling infrastructures, investing in a massive PBX system and installing a new wiring loom. And it would have been outdated in a few months.'

Instead, the RSPCA was looking for an advanced future-proof telecommunications solution which would support the charity's operations into the foreseeable future, while at the same time reducing costs.

High quality alternative to PBX

Following a detailed investigation of the marketplace, the RSPCA selected an advanced Cisco IP (Internet Protocol) Telephony solution powered by Cisco's AVVID (Architecture for Voice, Video and Integrated Data) technology. Cisco was the only vendor able to show the RSPCA other customer implementations of a similar or larger size, running IP Telephony in a production environment. In addition, Cisco was the only vendor able to supply the all the RSPCA's IP telephony requirements, including IP Phones.

Cisco's IP Telephony solution provides a reliable high quality alternative to PBX, while unifying the voice and data environments. 'The new building has allowed us to take a leap in IP strategy and build voice, data and video on a converged network, to capitalise on the benefits of integrated applications,' says Matt Winckless. 'Cisco's IP Telephony technology was an obvious choice. It helps us maximise the efficiency of our organisation by offering sophisticated communication tools.'

The Cisco solution is based on a high-speed core network of Catalyst 6500 switches with VoIP gateway interfaces and Catalyst 3500 edge switches. These also provide in-line power to the 400 Cisco 7960 IP phones. A cluster of two resilient Cisco MSC 7835 Call Managers control the IP telephony network and a third Call Manager has been deployed for developing new services. Cisco 3600 and 1700 routers and PIX firewalls provide secure connection to the Internet and other RSPCA sites.

Feature-rich applications

The new system enables converged applications such as voicemail, unified messaging, automated forwarding, interactive voice response and intranet access.

Prior to implementation, the RSPCA ran extensive proof-of-concept trials. 'Mimicking the products and services that we were going to use, including load balancing for data and voice traffic, ensured that any risks were minimised,' continues Matt Winckless.

Following the success of the trials, Cisco worked with the RSPCA to install the system at the new Headquarters. Despite unavoidable weather-related delays in the construction of the building, the team completed installation within 4 months, ready for the September 2001 opening.

Staff appreciated the seamless migration from the legacy PBX system in the old building, and are pleased with the new system. 'Those who have used the final, integrated solution have been impressed with its speed, ease of use, and functionality,' comments Matt Winckless.

As the system is rolled out across all the RSPCA sites, each desk will be equipped with a Cisco IP Phone, serving as an information portal. 'We chose to put a Cisco IP Phone on every desk because these allow people to access invaluable information, for example, the company directory and the RSPCA intranet, at the touch of a button,' continues Matt Winckless.

A Virtual Contact Centre

With the new IP infrastructure in place, Cisco's IP Contact Centre solution will integrate the RSPCA's regional call centres into an advanced virtual contact centre. This offers intelligent call routing, to distribute enquiries by agent availability and skill, regardless of location. It also allows phone, fax and email enquiries to be prioritised, to ensure fast response to emergency calls.

Call centre operators will have on-screen intranet access to current details of animals available for re-homing, thereby helping to maximise adoption rates. And Interactive Voice Response will make it even easier for callers to navigate the RSPCA call centre options.

Innovative additional applications

The RSPCA is also building on its IP solution in other innovative ways. For example, the charity has developed its own IP Phone-based external entry system. It is looking at a wireless solution to allow access to video information from security cameras sited across its animal welfare centres. And it is investigating Cisco's voice-activated personal assistance software, which connects an IP Phone user to a named contact, via intelligent 'appointments diary-based' routing.

Major cost reductions

The new IP infrastructure delivers significant cost savings for the RSPCA. By carrying voice and data over the same cable infrastructure, it reduces cabling requirements and simplifies network management and maintenance. The new integrated solution has saved the RSPCA £80,000 on cabling costs alone. The total expected savings will be far higher: up to £2 million over three to five years.

By delivering significant savings while offering new generation applications, the RSPCA's new IP Telephony solution promises to support its vital animal welfare work far into the future. 'This new solution delivers the true benefits of convergence: to the RSPCA, to the public at large, and most importantly, to the animals needing our care,' concludes Matt Winckless.



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