

Cisco helps university of Wolverhampton become champion of higher education in the West Midlands

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CUSTOMER NAME · University of Wolverhampton
LOCATION · Wolverhampton, West Midlands
INDUSTRY · Education
COMPANY SIZE · 2,000 employees
BUSINESS CHALLENGE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Act as a catalyst in the community to encourage more people to enter higher education · Provide students and staff with a high quality teaching and learning environment · Deliver ubiquitous access to learning facilities
NETWORK SOLUTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cisco Connected Learning · Network Access Control for 3,000 people
BUSINESS RESULTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Helps increase Wolverhampton's reputation as a leading regional UK higher education institution · Supports one of the UK's most widely accessed learning portals · Improves communication and information sharing for students and staff · Significantly reduces security risk, despite allowing network access to 1,000s of student laptops · Provides a platform for developing and implementing future services and applications

University of Wolverhampton uses Cisco Connected Learning to the deliver advanced learning solutions.

Business Challenge

The University of Wolverhampton is fast developing a reputation for providing its 23,000 students and 2,000 staff with a high quality, state-of-the-art learning environment. A £60 million, seven-year building programme launched in the late 1990s incorporating a network platform supporting Cisco IP technology has helped the University of Wolverhampton to increase its reputation as a leading education institute in the West Midlands, with many modern and advanced learning facilities.

The University of Wolverhampton has a mix of regional students and a number foreign and distant learning students. Students are predominantly part-time and mature. The University has ten schools offering over 340 undergraduate and postgraduate courses and also has well over 1,000 students from around the world join each year.

The University of Wolverhampton aims to become a first class regional university and an agent of change for its diverse mix of students and the community as a whole. It already has the highest number of undergraduates in the West Midlands and was the first university in the UK to open a high street shop offering higher education advice to the general public. The new building programme at the University of Wolverhampton was an opportunity to review the networking infrastructure and to seek ways of improving its functionality and increase return on investment.

Network Solution

The University of Wolverhampton is deploying Cisco foundation technologies across three separate sites – the Wolverhampton campus, plus locations at Telford 20 miles away and Walsall 10 miles away – to enable it to converge voice and data on to a single network infrastructure. The three locations are linked together using the West Midlands Broadband Network. The network supports over 5,000 network access points, as well as wireless networking across key learning and open access areas across all campuses and student residences. The network platform is a multi-service network which improves management with features such as the ability to deploy existing and future security services without needing to change the network.



The Cisco solution is enabling the University to develop and build the Cisco Connected Learning plan. This is a step-by-step approach for a university to transform itself into a globally-focused, student-centric institution delivering benefits such as 24/7, anytime, anywhere access to teaching and learning facilities, improved and automated management of a campus estate and access resources outside a university.

One of the major challenges for a University like Wolverhampton is its fluctuating population which changes dramatically every September when new students arrive. This places a lot of demand on



computer security because these students bring thousands of unchecked laptops onto the network. To solve this issue, Wolverhampton has implemented Cisco's Network Access Control (NAC) appliance security solution which automatically checks every device that attempts to access the network, for potential security threats. The Cisco NAC appliance has had a considerable impact on the University's operational staff because it has freed up their time, from constantly fire fighting security issues, to focus on more valuable learning applications and services

for students and staff. For example, the NAC appliance enables the University of Wolverhampton to deploy new and updated security policies quickly and reliably across the whole environment. The deployment of the NAC appliance at the University, which covers 3,000 seats, is one of the largest of its kind in UK education.

The NAC appliance sits alongside other Cisco network security solutions such as Cisco Intrusion Detection that are standard with Cisco foundation technologies to provide a secure, yet flexible network infrastructure.

Cisco networking equipment was first used at the University of Wolverhampton in 1992 and has been upgraded to provide a platform for delivering additional services and applications that can be implemented in the future.



The Cisco solution at the University of Wolverhampton has been implemented by Logicalis, a Cisco Gold Certified Partner.

Business Results

The Cisco network is now fundamental to the education, management and administration of the University. It provides e-learning, email and communications to all our staff and students accessible either on campus or via the Internet; it provides access to a huge variety of information about the University to everyone; it is used to place orders and monitor budgets, arrange meetings and a whole variety of administrative tasks. Cisco has unified everything on to a single network. Basically we couldn't manage without it," says Dr Phil Range, director of IT Services, the University of Wolverhampton.

“The University of Wolverhampton has set its sights on being more than a higher education establishment. It wants to help raise the level of education attainment for the whole region, particularly for those people who would not normally consider higher education. The use of technology from Cisco is having, and will continue to have, a significant impact on our ability to achieve that goal.”

Dr Phil Range, Director of IT Services, The University of Wolverhampton

As part of its objective to become a beacon of learning in the West Midlands, the University of Wolverhampton has developed one of the UK's most used on-line learning portals – WOLF

(Wolverhampton Online Learning Framework). It has over 23,000 active users in an academic year – almost all the University's student population. It provides both students and staff with a range of learning and teaching resources covering every aspect of the University of Wolverhampton's academic curriculum.

PRODUCT LIST

Routing and Switching

- Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series Switches
- Cisco Catalyst 3560 Series Switches
- Cisco Catalyst 3750 Series Switches
- CiscoWorks LAN Management Solution

Security and VPN

- Cisco's Network Access Control (NAC)
- Cisco Intrusion Detection
- Cisco Firewall Services Module

Essential to WOLF is the Cisco network which enables students and staff to access and use the portal from offices, classrooms or the University's social learning spaces such as commercial-standard cafes. The addition of Cisco wireless technology across all sites makes access even easier.

Range says, "The University of Wolverhampton is committed to excellence in its teaching, research and business activities. Integrated and unified networking technologies from Cisco alongside our multi-million pound facilities, dedicated study and support staff, and dynamic ethos, means we are a first-class regional university with a learning environment fit for the 21st Century."

The wireless capability is particularly useful for foreign students – of which there is a high number at the University – because they can use their own laptops with native language versions of software, but still have access to all the information and communication benefits of the University network. Cisco wireless networking is also instrumental in enabling Wolverhampton to rationalise space and make use of learning facilities more flexible because both teaching staff and students can be anywhere on the campus and still access all the information and communication systems they need.

As well as WOLF, administration and other applications like email, the Cisco network is used for high bandwidth applications such as computational linguistics and engineering.

In the future, the University of Wolverhampton plans to use the Cisco platform to enhance existing facilities like WOLF and adopt new technologies such as hosting on-line examinations and other possible applications like a CCTV system to help control physical security and site management.

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Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-4000
800 553-NETS (6387)
Fax: 408 527-0883

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
168 Robinson Road
#28-01 Capital Tower
Singapore 068912
www.cisco.com
Tel: +65 6317 7777
Fax: +65 6317 7799

Europe Headquarters
Cisco Systems International BV
Haarlerbergpark
Haarlerbergweg 13-19
1101 CH Amsterdam
The Netherlands
www-europe.cisco.com
Tel: +31 0 800 020 0791
Fax: +31 0 20 357 1100

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