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BT helps Brunel become more attractive to students through Bring Your Own Device

Brunel
UNIVERSITY
L O N D O N

Keenly aware of the need to continue attracting students from the UK and globally, Brunel asked BT to help create a consistent, secure experience for people using their own devices at the University.

Universities have been forced to become more competitive due to changes in their funding structure. With students now personally investing in their degrees, they're demanding the very best value for money in terms of services and facilities.

As a progressive University, with nearly 15,000 students from over 100 countries worldwide, Brunel has been allowing students to use their own devices to some extent on campus for more than a decade. But it wanted to remove as many of the existing limitations as possible.

The University's main challenge was to overcome security and bandwidth issues to enable students, as well as visitors and staff, to access the network in more ways from more places. It also wanted to remove restrictions to desired applications without compromising security or impacting the network.

Expertise in the education sector

Explains Andrew Kershaw, director of external affairs: "Students come to university with all manner of equipment - iPads, iPods, smartphones...and therefore they expect that things will work. We had to put in place a plan of investment."

In order to make it happen, Brunel University needed a partner with the expertise to provide additional support and knowledge in maximizing the effectiveness of their existing investment in Cisco® Borderless Networks.

It was vital that this partner had a sound understanding of Cisco® solutions and their application within an educational setting. As the UK's leading Cisco® partner with a proven track record in providing similar successful deployments, BT was the partner of choice. Better still, with its single vendor architecture the solution requires minimal management - of crucial significance to Brunel, who want to ensure on-going running costs and disruptions are kept to a minimum.

> " BT added good knowledge and skills to my team.
>
> Simon Furber
> Network manager, Brunel University

Meeting student demands

With BT's knowledge and support, Brunel University is now able to respond to student needs more quickly and easily, enabling more of an 'anywhere, anyhow' culture for students wanting to use their own devices, with better access to learning tools as well as gaming, social networks and apps.

Simple and effective security, using passwords and encrypted log on, now fronts the full security requirements within the network. This has created a more flexible and secure environment to support the academic life of students.

Students are now able to work flexibly and more easily with simplified access to the University's Wi-Fi (ResNet) outdoors and in communal places like the coffee shop, library and halls of residence, maximising their productivity. They can easily email lecturers and other students, as well as access all of their projects.

With some students bringing as many as three devices to university - a laptop, smartphone and a gaming device, using the ResNet and roaming services can ease the financial burden on them of burning up their own data bandwidth on personal tariffs. In addition, access to the majority of games students commonly play is now also allowed via the network.

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Welcoming additional revenue streams

The project has been completed in perfect time to ensure visitors to the campus for London 2012 and beyond will be able to use their own devices securely during their stay. It also ensures Brunel can pursue further opportunities to generate revenue. Says Simon Furber, network manager of Brunel University: "It means when initiatives come along like, for example, the Olympics, we've been able to capitalise on that investment, add that to the existing architecture and build new services upon it."

He concludes: "BT added good knowledge and good skills to my team, that will enable us to develop services going forward. Bring Your Own Device is not a new concept to Brunel University but by using the latest 'identity based' network services we aim to provide one of the least restrictive network experiences amongst UK universities."

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