

Industry: Education Solution: Adaptable digital platforms

University of Derby scales new peaks of experience and agility with a connected digital campus

“From the offset, we were impressed by Logicalis’ deep understanding of the latest Cisco technologies which de-risked our early adoption. Installation was completed within three months which was really impressive given the complexity of the solution.”

Neil Williams, Chief Information Officer

The customer

The University of Derby is at the cutting edge of modernity. Located in the heart of England’s Peak District, Derbyshire is a place where innovators and industrialists have made their mark on the world over the past 300 years. Derby continues to push the region’s progressive frontier with a transformational smart campus project.

The challenge

To undertake a multi-year project to create a connected digital campus and advance the IT services the University needs to deliver learning, teaching and research at peak performance.

The benefits



1Gbps

to the desktop due to exceptional application on demand delivery performance



13,000

extra student wireless devices on the network in the past year



5%

increase on Derby’s Jisc digital survey on wireless



Advanced network analytics

helps Derby make data-driven decisions about facilities, transport, building use and safety

The challenge

Connectivity is the first service that students experience when they arrive on campus. It's also one of the largest investment items on the budget of every CIO in Higher Education. With value for money under scrutiny by fee-paying students, the University needed to demonstrate that these experiences add real value and can be delivered at optimal operational cost.



We also wanted to deliver more value to more people. Colleagues in marketing, finance, and student services wanted more insight into the estate to make better decisions about facilities, transport, building use and safety. We also needed more capacity and connectivity choice and a simpler approach to using and operating the network.

Neil Williams, Chief Information Officer

Derby wanted to build a network connectivity platform that would both deliver its current requirements and adapt to the needs of future students and stakeholders.

The solution

Derby selected Cisco's Catalyst 9k platform; a decision underpinned with a strategy to implement Cisco Software Defined Access (SDA).

Making an early decision to use Cisco SDA means we will be able to layer on new services without increasing costs, drive greater operational efficiencies and support a greater diversity of applications and data.



The University understood there would be some risk in investing in just-released, leading-edge technology. To mitigate that risk, Williams and his team turned to the expertise of partner Logicalis UK to design a software-defined ready network architecture.



We were highly impressed by the project team's flexible approach to services engagement and continued focus to make sure any anticipated issues were fixed through collaborative go-live support.

The benefits

Derby is now planning the next phases of the project, leveraging the new platform to further automate the delivery, control and management of its network connectivity services, improving security and operational efficiency while keeping costs down.

Using the Cisco technology, we can already control network access and authenticate users and devices. This is all essential to ensure we are compliant and protected from cyber threats. But the power of the current investment comes when we layer across further control to personalise services with ease.



The network supports more devices and increasing traffic flow without disruption. We're also planning to extend coverage, even out to the bus stops, so students can connect sooner as they head into campus.

Application on demand delivery is performing exceptionally well and students benefit from the service with speeds of 1Gbps to the desktop. Wireless speed has increased significantly with a 5% increase on Derby's Jisc digital survey on wireless. Wireless uptake from students has grown exponentially with 13,000 extra student wireless devices on the network in the past year.

By utilising Cisco CMX, Cisco DNA Spaces and Cisco wireless access points, the team now has functioning wireless analytics across its three campuses to observe and evaluate how users move through its locations and use teaching and social spaces. This valuable insight will help Derby streamline services and improve resources for students, staff and guests.

Future impact

The Logicalis platform is the foundation for a journey of value to make Derby's campuses smarter and more intelligence-driven. New projects include capability to accommodate and use IoT technologies and devices.



Other departments are also seeing value in the network. For example, our estates management team is now able to overlay their building management systems on the shared infrastructure. Connected digital lighting will make the campus safer and greener. This is just the start. Anything is possible.

What can we do for your organisation?

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