

## Case Study

National College  
of Ireland



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Ireland



# Network upgrade keeps College cutting-edge

## Challenge

In the last decade the National College of Ireland has established itself as one of the country's leading educational institutions, running third-level courses out of a modern campus in the heart of Dublin Docklands. The two-acre site is home to 5,000 full and part-time students and over 130 full-time staff and faculty.

When the College moved to the Docklands in 2002 it was a greenfield site that presented an opportunity to invest in the very latest technologies. It was one of the first implementations of IP telephony in Ireland, with BT designing and deploying a network based around Cisco products.

"We always try to be innovative around technology and that investment worked very well for us," said Geraldine Minogue, IT Manager, NCI, "but we outgrew the bandwidth capability and the hardware was nearing the end of its life."

The College's bandwidth requirement has substantially increased over the years as more applications and services were rolled out to students and staff. The introduction of an MSc course on web technology, where students need regular internet access, put further strain on the network.

Users had more and more latency issues which they brought to the attention an IT department that was powerless to do anything about it. After approval from the board, the College went to market looking for a provider to upgrade the core system and the voice service. BT won the contract.

## Benefits

BT deployed new core infrastructure with a 10GB backbone delivering "gigabit to the desktop" speeds that radically improved the end user experience. Sticking with Cisco's flagship technology, BT has given the network scalability and resilience, future-proofing the College for the next generation of applications and services.

A new IP telephony system, Cisco CallManager, became the enabler for additional voice services, the most significant of which was contact centre functionality with Cisco Unified Contact Center Express. Brought in-house for the first time, the contact centre addresses a key business requirement, the seasonal recruitment of new students. With 15 customer service seats the College is now able to manage all enquiries internally and route them directly to the relevant people.

One of the biggest challenges for BT was rolling out the infrastructure with minimal disruption to users. The campus has very little downtime. After extensive planning and preparation the decision was taken to make the switch over a single weekend. All parties involved worked flat out to make the most of the brief window that was available. The ambitious timeline was met with everything up and running on Monday morning. "I'd have no problem recommending BT after the work they did," said Geraldine Minogue. "We took advice from them and they listened to our requirements. It worked very well."

"We moved them from a position where their network had the potential to become a bottleneck to a modern infrastructure that is resilient and reliable, with faster response times," said Martin Gleeson, Senior ICT Specialist, BT. "It's what we do best. We increase network utilisation and maximise performance."

## Offices worldwide

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