



City of Glasgow College turns to SIP for resilience and cost savings



About City of Glasgow College

From humble beginnings in 1956 as Glasgow Corporation's Stow College of Hairdressing, subsequent expansions and mergers have made what is now the City of Glasgow College one of Scotland's largest, boasting 1,200 staff and offering more than 2,600 different courses to more than 32,500 full time, part time and distance learning students of some 135 nationalities.

While the curriculum still very much features hairdressing, it has grown to include subjects from construction and creative through to stonemasonry and wine. Glasgow's long heritage in shipping and shipbuilding is celebrated in a newly opened £66M campus on the River Clyde which is training the next generation of marine engineers and ships' crew. Meanwhile a new campus is taking shape in the heart of the city which – when combined with the existing sites – will take the student roll to 40,000.

“Gamma's proposal met all the requirements, didn't cost us a fortune which it would have done with other vendors, and we could lose ISDN completely and use JANET which we already had. It's also good that Gamma has a major support centre right here in Glasgow. We're never going to get such a personal service from anyone else.”

Liam Mulgrew,
New Campus Telecommunications Officer,
City of Glasgow College

The challenge

Continuing Scotland's proud maritime history, the college's Riverside Campus is home to the nautical studies faculty, which aims to teach 10,000 students a year. A legacy phone system based on ISDN and an aging PBX badly needed updating to match the rest of the site's ultra modern facilities. At the same time ISDN's rigid numbering scheme, which binds numbers to physical locations, did not suit the college's progressive thinking and its continuing construction and consolidation programme.

Saving money was a priority too, with ISDN line rentals and call charges not offering best value. The college also wanted to make more use of its high bandwidth Joint Academic NETWORK (JANET) connection. And finally it wanted to move to a converged network infrastructure with a view to improving connectivity and providing more resilience for vital services, together with laying a foundation for a telephony system that will eventually extend to some 3,000 extensions city-wide.





The solution

Having decided on SIP technology and SIP trunks as the best way forward, the college was surprised by the lack of relevant knowledge and competitive pricing shown by vendors it approached – until it spoke with Gamma that is. As the country's leading SIP trunk provider we were able to meet and exceed the college's needs while offering compelling prices. And our pre-existing JANET interconnects meant a tick in that box too.

Acting quickly we provisioned SIP trunking over JANET to the college's Cisco PBX and ported over a block of 399 numbers seamlessly and without fuss or disruption. A separate, diversely routed fibre connection will, when added, provide robust connectivity back up. Resilience is further enhanced by the flexibility and instant controllability of SIP allowing important phone numbers to be routed to alternative sites in the event of outages.



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The benefits

- Much more intuitive and easier for staff to use
- Real time visibility of call traffic levels allows smart call routing according to workloads
- 130 ISDN channels replaced by SIP trunking, slashing line rental and call costs by 40% despite two-fold increase in calls made
- Capacity to cope readily with peaks in call traffic – for example during clearing
- Separate JANET and fibre connections to deliver resilience and load sharing. SIP technology permits easy, instant fall back not possible before
- Local presence of Gamma support centre and account manager a bonus. College gets a personal service – not just another anonymous customer
- Seamless and trouble free migration, including number porting, within a few hours of signing a single form
- Numbers now independent of physical location suits college's evolution and convergence strategy.
- State of the art phone system for state of the art college facilities.

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