



## ● Virtualisation upgrade for improved, resilient telephony.

### The Background

City University London has 2,500 employees and over 18,500 students across its 23 sites. The University is in the top 5% of world universities and the Lord Mayor of London is its Chancellor.

City is a customer of Daisy Corporate Services (formerly Damovo UK).

### The Challenge

City's existing Mitel MD110 was installed in 1991 and needed a major upgrade – not least because manufacturer support was being withdrawn at the end of 2014. With 23 sites and over 5,000 calls every day, it was vital that a new solution be found before support ran out.

The old network also lacked resilience, so the new solution had to ensure that there was no single point of failure, whilst also reducing the amount of hardware across the estate. Telecoms Team Leader Matthew Craughwell explains further, "We initially considered a number of UC providers, including the Mitel solution from our long-standing communications provider Daisy. And in the end, Mitel was the best option – partly because we could upgrade rather than having to 'rip and replace', and also because of the integration potential and Mitel's accreditation level with Microsoft.

Another thing that moved us towards Daisy was the Platinum support option, and they also have Platinum Partner status with Mitel – which many other third party suppliers haven't. We're trying to be the best university and so we want the best people maintaining it. And that partner accreditation speaks for itself."



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## The Solution

Daisy proposed an upgrade by swapping the MD110 network for four virtualised MX-ONE® platforms in the university's main data centre, with an additional MX-ONE in a separate data centre for resilience. One of the key benefits of this approach was that Matthew didn't have to worry about replacing 3,000+ handsets, which would have been expensive and also very time consuming - something which was simply not an option.

After a five year Platinum service contract was signed, Daisy started work as soon as Clearing had finished - a process which alone sees the university handling up to 8,000 calls a day into its 160 agent Clearing Contact Centre. Stage one involved upgrading the environment to remove single points of failure within the network and also setting up a new virtualised MX-ONE environment across the two data centres, to provide increased resilience. The next step was to rewire 3,600+ extensions and install 21 media gateways, one at each site on campus.

Simultaneously, Daisy also moved the university's on-premise Solidus Contact Centre platform to a virtual environment, as well as replacing old operator work stations with the InAttend application - and switching the Service Desk from Desktop Manager to BluStar Web.

A key part of implementing these new applications was the training, as Matthew continues, "A lot of companies make the investment in applications, but they don't realise they need to make the investment in training as well. Daisy's training was a big win for us - staff who were affected said how helpful it was in enabling them to do their jobs well.

We're already making savings on power, due to the efficiency of the new gateways, but the long term financial savings will come when we have fully migrated to IP telephones on the network. This will save on wiring and on manpower to install the phones - as well as giving us all the resilience of a data network."

## The Result

The network was successfully cut over at the end of November, with minimal disruption for staff. Because the majority of the upgrade work took place at the core and not at the desktop, most staff members noticed very little change. In fact, City University London's directors actually commented on the fantastic job - as they didn't really notice anything happening!

Full project completion took place on 18th December, well in advance of the 2015 deadline. And now that it has been in place for a few months many other benefits are becoming clear, as Matthew explains, "A significant amount of space has been freed up by removing the old MD110 network - and resilience that is built into our network, and our VMware environment, now ensures that the service is always available. Integrating applications has reduced the amount of input that's required to keep our directories up to date, plus we are consuming less power with the new gateways and virtual servers. One other thing I really love on the MX-ONE is the fantastic fault reporting, which gives us far greater insight and intelligence."

Benefits to the university and the IT team are one thing of course, but it's also important to note that there have been benefits for students as well, as Matthew concludes, "Students are paying more now, and they are expecting more from us, so we wanted to be able to offer 24/7 support. Having this in place now ensures we can keep the service running with the maximum amount of uptime. If there are any problems, they are logged and promptly dealt with before our students or staff even become aware of the issue.

We've also started using Daisy's online Customer Service Portal to log faults, and we have auto call-logging - so the service desk picks it up and I only get involved when there's a problem! We interact with the Support Desk regularly - to us, the high quality support we all receive is the most important part."

"You have to be careful who you pick as your suppliers. Daisy and Mitel have been there a long time and are definitely going in the right direction - so that's why we went down this route."



*"As a university, a large number of people rely on being able to get in touch with you around the clock. The decision to upgrade to a cloud solution was an obvious choice. A lot of support is currently being withdrawn on older telephone systems, and we simply can't risk being caught out without that all-important telephone system in place."*

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