

# Victoria University Cuts Call Costs, Improves Staff Collaboration with Unified Communications

Victoria University

## industry:

Education

## country:

Australia

## business challenge:

Improve operations and workplace performance by providing the right mix of technology to simplify communication between teachers across 11 campuses

## solution:

A unified communications environment based on Cisco and Microsoft technologies

## services:

- Microsoft Office Communication Server Design and Implementation Services
- Microsoft Exchange Server Design and Implementation Services for
- IP Telephony Deployment Services

## results:

- Improved communication between 4,000 staff members across the university's campuses
- Introduced video calling capabilities which eliminated the need for teachers, human resources and IT staff to travel between campuses, saving time and reducing operational costs
- Removed the need for teachers to make numerous phone calls and send emails to gain access to the information they required

## Executive Summary

Victoria University deployed a new **unified communications system** based on Cisco Unified Communications Manager 8.0, Cisco Unified Presence Server 8.0, Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2 and Microsoft Exchange 2010 to **enhance communication across the university and reduce operational costs.**

## Client Overview

Established in 1990, Victoria University is one of five multi-sector universities across Australia offering Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and higher education courses. Victoria University has 4,000 staff and 51,000 students, including 15,000 from overseas.

The university's learning path enables students to move from a certificate course through to an advanced diploma, degree or postgraduate qualification by coursework or research.

## Business Challenge

Since 2007, the university's mandate has been to improve operations and workplace performance, enhance communication, improve the student experience, and increase collaboration among staff. It aimed to achieve this by replacing an ageing, costly PABX phone system running on a legacy network and unifying its voice and data systems, which sat in 'silos' across its 11 campuses.

Victoria University has initiated a training and culture change program to improve its knowledge of unified communications services and take collaboration at the university to the next level.

"We wanted to unify voice onto our data network and deploy new infrastructure to improve mobility for users and make it easier for staff to contact each other regardless of where they were located,"

said **Sam Khoury, Program Manager at Victoria University.**

"This would include bringing unified voice, video and instant messaging to the desktop. It would also support remote learning by using technology to overcome the distance between faculties and campuses. Our initial objective was to allow staff to advertise their location and availability using presence, regardless of whether they were on campus or at home."

"As a result, our staff no longer need to be on campus to access key services such as email or voicemail; they can also collaborate with other staff members anywhere and at any time."

## Solution Delivered

In late 2009, Victoria University engaged Dimension Data to deploy a new unified communications environment. The university initially deployed Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2, which provided instant messaging, presence, video calling and collaboration. This enabled 4,000 teachers to talk and share teaching and course documents and other material using their PCs, notebooks and other devices from any location.

Dimension Data then assisted the university to upgrade its email and messaging platform from Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 to Microsoft Exchange Server 2010, allowing teachers to listen to their voicemail messages from anywhere in the world on any device by clicking on an MP3 file delivered to their Microsoft Outlook inbox.

“We wanted to unify voice onto our data network and deploy new infrastructure to improve mobility for users and make it easier for **staff to contact each other regardless of where** they were located.”

Sam Khoury, Program Manager at Victoria University.

“The move to Microsoft Exchange Server 2010 gave us an integrated voicemail system so we would be ready for the move to a new IP telephony phone system,” said Khoury.

In 2010, the university's PABX was replaced with a new IP telephony system based on Cisco Unified Communications Manager 8.0 and Cisco Unified Presence Server 8.0.

The university also deployed Cisco 9971 and 7945 Unified IP phones. The IP telephony deployment – which will cover the university's 11 local campuses and international locations by September 2011 – represents the largest part of its multi-million dollar unified communications program.

Cisco Unified Communications Manager allows teachers to log into their extensions from any phone across the network. Integration with Microsoft Office Communications Server provides remote call control capabilities so teachers can make and receive calls using their computers. Senior managers with the top-of-the-line Cisco 9971 IP phones can make video calls using the built-in web cameras.

The Cisco Unified Presence Server talks to Microsoft Office Communications Server to update a person's presence with their call status. For example, it will indicate if a person is on a call, out of the office or in a meeting.

The infrastructure runs on top of a Cisco Gigabit Ethernet network supported by Cisco Catalyst 3750G Gigabit Ethernet switches. This integrated network enables the university to deliver video and voice to 4,000 desktops as well as numerous mobile devices.

## How We Delivered

Dimension Data designed and implemented Victoria University's Microsoft Office Communications Server, Microsoft Exchange Server and Cisco IP telephony environments in conjunction with the university's internal IT team. This process took around 16 months.

During each deployment, Dimension Data engineers gathered the university's requirements; created a detailed design and proof-of-concept; ran a pilot program; and conducted testing before going live.

They also created manuals and trained the company's IT staff on using and administering the various systems.

According to Khoury, the knowledge transfer was seamless. “Dimension Data's experts are the best in the business based on their value for money, experience, reputation and understanding of our requirements. They used best-practice methods that ensured the infrastructure was deployed within a relatively short time. They worked with our internal staff to ensure our deployment was world-class and met all our requirements,” said Khoury.

Dimension Data will continue to play a supporting role to ensure the systems are well maintained before eventually handing over management to the university in 2011.

## Value Derived

The new unified communications environment has improved communication among 4,000 staff members across the university's campuses. Staff are completing more than 1,000 video calls per month and many are also using instant messaging to communicate.

Video calling capabilities also eliminate the need for teachers, human resources and IT staff to travel between campuses, which saves time and reduces operational costs.

“Microsoft Office Communicator usage is skyrocketing,” said Khoury. “It doesn't matter where teachers or other staff are located, they can share a document, chat to colleagues using instant messaging, communicate over video and generally get access to knowledge when they need it without having to send emails or make a lot of phone calls. Their productivity is maximised and they don't have to travel unless it's really necessary.”

The integrated IP telephony, voicemail and email service, which is in the process of being rolled out to all staff members, is significantly less expensive to run than the previous PABX system and separate email platform. Specifically, the university can instantly move a staff member's extension, make changes to their phone status or add new users to the network.

“Previously, we had to pay someone to come out and recable the phones every time we wanted to move a staff member to another location,” said Khoury.

According to Khoury, Victoria University is now a more flexible and agile workplace and is achieving its vision to provide integrated technology that makes it easier for staff to communicate with each other.

“We now have a unified network and an integrated set of tools which allow us to easily manage the needs of staff and help to increase their productivity. We are also planning to make Microsoft Office Communications Server available to students in 2011.”



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