

# Nottingham university

Business



Company: ntlCustomer: Nottingham UniversitySubmitted by: Nelson BostockThe University of Nottingham (UoN) is a modern and forward-thinking establishment.

In an increasingly competitive sector, it understands that it must offer increasingly up-to-date services to attract students of the highest intellectual quality.” Students really appreciate being able to communicate with friends and relatives without having to queue at a payphone. I am also impressed with ntl’s responsiveness. Any issues raised at our regular forums are always dealt with reasonably, and ntl clearly listens to what the students say about the service.” Alex Sackey, Chairman of Student Union, University of NottinghamEarly in 1997, UoN decided to investigate a student centred telecommunications system. A hotly contested tender process followed.

ntl proposed a radical solution that would give each student a private telephone and data point in their own study-bedroom: innovatively delivering a fully integrated, secure and resilient voice and data network. The result has transformed UoN. Peter Simmonds, UoN’s Director of Procurement, comments: “ We have had excellent feedback on the service from both students and their families. Concerns have been addressed and we are pleased at ntl’s commitment to continue developing the offer to our students.” ntl were incredibly proactive in coming up with ideas during the tender process. They came forward with a calling card payment solution – a very persuasive factor.

“

## **open to learning**

The relationship between academic establishments and the commercial world is changing. New financial pressures coupled with an expanding student population now mean that universities must try much harder to win students. With a campus setting just outside the town and its renown for academic accomplishment, UoN has historically attracted some of the best students in the UK. However, it saw that to continue this success it needed to provide leading-edge student facilities. Peter Simmonds explains: “ We were keen to have the best communications infrastructure in the UK.

To give students individual phones in their study-bedrooms was part of this vision. Previously they were sharing one phone between 150 and having to walk along corridors if they wanted to make a phone call. We consulted with the students through the Student Union and there was a lot of interest in this concept.”

## **studied solution**

When UoN went out to tender, ntl was invited to respond along with four other suppliers – and it won the 10-year contract. ntl proposed a permanent office on-site to ensure smooth uptake and ongoing management of the service, and a simple pre-payment method for the study-room voice and data service.

The installation was completed in twelve months. It was completed right on time: working around students taking finals, and ensuring zero noise intrusion around the examination rooms.” Obviously we had to be sensitive to the fact that students occupied the campus the whole time, and there are

also listed buildings that required careful handling. ntl project-managed the implementation very closely and the ntl project manager worked very well with our counterpart,” Peter Simmonds recalls.

### **top marks**

Each of the study-bedrooms has a telephone with its own number, along with optional voicemail. Any numbers on UoN’s network are free to dial, and recognising that students’ welfare needs are equally as important as communications needs, ntl provides free calls to the Student Union and counselling service as part of the package.

CAT-5 cabling gives 10Mbps bandwidth into each study-bedroom and offers students access to UoN’s intranet – providing services such as computer assisted learning packages, library access, course notes time-tabling information, individual university email accounts and hosted software applications. UoN’s network has a nodal link to ntl’s state-of-the-art Centrex fibre network. This delivers exceptional resilience by automatically switching communications traffic to a new link should road works – for example – disrupt any single point.

### **convenient resource**

The cost to UoN is zero. Because of the Government’s Private Finance initiative, ntl is able to provide a fully managed and independent service.

Students pay for their calls by means of rechargeable pre-paid cards, which can also be used with any phone throughout the UK. The cards are re-charged from any phone anywhere. A single annual payment covers the connection charge. Additional services like voicemail and data access are <https://assignbuster.com/nottingham-university/>

optional for a small extra fee. ntl supply an on-site office, providing technical support and service advice. ntl also has a presence on UoN's website, this means that simple answers on pricing structures and service options can be easily accessed.

Out-of-hours technical issues are managed remotely at ntl's communications centre in Colwick £ only a few miles away.

### **qualified benefits**

UoN now has one of the most advanced telecommunications systems of any UK higher education establishment. It benefits from a full remotely managed service, taking out of its hands the worry and cost of owning and running such a complex system. Further installations at a newer campus - named Jubilee - have been completed, and the ultra-modern building with its communications infrastructure has become a flagship for other universities. The future will see full Internet access for all study-bedrooms. Discussions are taking place between the Student Union, UoN and ntl about integrating the pricing structure into tuition fees to allow universal access to the service.