



Wiltshire College Leaves the Bronze Age and Saves £70,000 per Year with 3CX Phone System

The county of Wiltshire, located in the southwest of England between Bristol and London, is home to Stonehenge, the ancient stone circle that rises from Salisbury Plain. Wiltshire is also home to Wiltshire College, one of the larger colleges in the UK. Founded in 2000, the college merged with Salisbury College in 2008 and is the main provider of further and higher education in Wiltshire. Today, 3,300 full-time students, 6,000 part-time students and 900 University Level students attend Wiltshire College at its four campuses - Chippenham, Lackham, Salisbury, and Trowbridge. Its reputation for quality provision, innovation and student care is without par. The college recently installed 3CX Phone System, linking all four of its campuses and more than 1,000 extensions. The result, in addition to a unified, efficient and scalable communications infrastructure, is reduced running telephony costs of £70,000 per year.

Rolling Everything into Place

In bringing together four constituent colleges, each with its own telephone system (three Siemens ISDX systems and one Avaya Index), and approximately 1,000 employees, Wiltshire College needed to create a unified, scalable communications infrastructure, one to which it could add more advanced features and functionality over time. The college wanted a high-quality, cost-effective, scalable system, one that would free it from the kind of expensive service contracts endemic to hardware-based PBX systems. While not nearly as ancient as Stonehenge, the systems in place at each of the four colleges were old, lacked modern features, and required expensive external maintenance.

The new phone system had to be robust, simple to install and easy to administer from a central location. The college required a number of core telephony services, including call pickup, call forwarding, queues, group ringing, hunt groups, presence, auto attendant, inbound and outbound call routing, a softphone option and call logging and reporting. Most importantly, the new phone system had to connect more than 1,000 extensions. Wiltshire College ICT support staff would ultimately manage the system, thus its interface had to enable the simple day-to-day telephony tasks such as adding new extensions, staff relocations, routing rules and voicemail without having to pay expensive call out fees to a PBX specialist. The PBX also had to accommodate college offices where part-time staff members share a single phone. Finally, the college needed to be able to add advanced features to the phone system at a later date, including on-screen call control, conference calls, call recording, hot-desking, CRM integration and mobile phone integration.

No Heavy Lifting

According to archeologists, the most dramatic stage of the construction of Stonehenge began sometime around 2150 BC, when some 82 bluestones from Wales were brought to Salisbury Plain. Installing 3CX Phone System at Wiltshire College, about 4,200 years after the arrival of these magnificent stones, required a lot less heavy lifting.



Following a formal tender process the contract was finally awarded in February 2012 to 3CX Certified Partner TRI-LAN I.T. Limited, which had proposed 3CX Phone System. Wiltshire College found 3CX Phone System to be feature-rich and cost effective. The college's ICT team appreciated the system's flexibility, and that 3CX Phone System is Windows-based and runs on existing hardware: Wiltshire College is a Microsoft site, and its staff is trained on Windows. 3CX Phone System proved three times cheaper than any other telephony option the college considered.

TRI-LAN provides IT business systems and services to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The company maintains offices in Devon and Reading, which puts Wiltshire College smack in the middle of its service area. TRI-LAN was responsible for all software installation and configuration at the college, together with all ISDN gateway installations, while the Wiltshire College ICT team carried out the physical rollout of 650 Grandstream GXP-1405 handsets; these SIP phones supported a number of key features, including dual 10/100, PoE, display, system directory, history, headset, speaker-phone, message waiting indicator and conference calls.

On the evening of 20 April, all external Wiltshire College primary rate lines were decommissioned from the old PBX switches and connected to new Patton ISDN-SIP gateways, and 3CX Phone System went live. The total changeover only took two hours. Once tested, the system proved stable. Following further testing and monitoring the following morning, the system remained fully functional, and 3CX Phone System immediately became, much like Stonehenge, a permanent fixture in Wiltshire.

A Stunning Monument to Software-based Telephony

3CX Phone System has performed flawlessly since installation on a Microsoft Hyper-V virtual server. The system has helped the college reduce its phone related IT costs by 70 percent, particularly its telephony maintenance expenditure and set up costs for new extensions. 3CX Phone System has made Wiltshire College staff more accessible, both to students and to each other, as call queue management has improved significantly. There is now tighter integration between the four campuses – with 3CXPhone for Android and iPhones (smartphone apps and full desktop phone replacements that allow users to make phone calls via WiFi and 3G), travelling staff can now login at multiple locations, including from home. The college can also take advantage of IP based SIP Trunk connectivity to replace its traditional ISDN lines – this method of providing external voice connectivity means exceptionally large savings.

The Wiltshire College team particularly appreciates the 3CX Call Center Module, which provides the college with advanced real time queue strategies, advanced agent statistics, Call-Back, SLA alerts, and other professional call centre features at a fraction of the fees charged by traditional call centres. The 3CX Call Center Module also lets the college monitor calls, manage workflow and track how many staff members are logged into the phone system at any one time.



Since the installation of 3CX Phone System in April 2012, Wiltshire College has added 75 more extensions, to make a total of 1,075, and is using around 700 phones. 3CX Phone System has processed more than 400,000 calls since its rollout - over 15,000 processed calls per week.

So, is Wiltshire College's new telephony system a stunning monument to outstanding technological implementation, strategic planning and cost efficiency?

"3CX Phone System is proving flexible and reliable," said Stephanie Stephenson, Director of Customer Services at Wiltshire College, "and it's on target to reduce our ongoing telephony maintenance, line rental, support, and call costs by 70 percent per annum, about £70,000."

Carve it in stone.

About TRI-LAN I.T. Limited

TRI-LAN I.T. Limited (TRI-LAN), a 3CX Partner, provides IT business systems and services to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The company specializes in file and systems servers; 3CX Phone System installation, maintenance and support; digital CCTV surveillance based on IP networking, and Internet Service Provision (Web hosting, ADSL, SDSL EFM, Fiber and SIP (VoIP) Trunks. TRI-LAN has more than forty years' experience supplying, configuring, installing and maintaining all major hardware and software products for its customers.