Case study: Bristol University

The education sector, and especially universities, are facing difficulties to keep up with the improvements that need to be made to stay on top of their game. With universities increasing their tuition fees, students are expecting even more from them, not only in terms of education but also infrastructure, services and technology.

Background

Last year, the University of Bristol was ranked as one of the top 50 universities in the world in the QS World University Rankings. Counting slightly over 23,000 students and over 6,000 staff spread across 6 faculties, the University of Bristol is dedicated to making its campus a modern and convenient space for its students and staff. Recently, they launched a new, multi-purpose and versatile Study Resource Hub at the centre of their campus to offer the best possible education methods and equipment to their students and researchers

In order to continue along that path, the University of Bristol decided to work with C3, to make a transition to multimedia communication to provide a clear and easy centralised system for their staff.

C3, a 30-year-old computer telephony specialist based in Cambridge, helps higher-education establishments add value to their infrastructures with solutions adapted to their modern needs and demands.

Case study

Client requirements

Like many other universities, the University of Bristol needed to make a quick and smooth transition from traditional telephony systems to new multi-channel Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephony.

With such a considerable number of staff and students, the university was in immediate need of a better call handling platform. They were looking for a powerful messaging/call handling platform that streamlines inbound calls and call-flows to handle clearing and student engagement.

The university needed to switch from old industry standard Time Division Multiplexing (TDM) telephone systems which carry voice calls over dedicated cabling, to new Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) controlled delivery, which delivers voice calls as data across the web as part of a multi-channel solution offering calls, SMS, email and instant messaging.

Our director, John Wood, said: "A lot of people working in academia are finding the switch to newer integrated systems which are internet-based challenging. But there's no doubt the new multi-channel internet solutions offer fantastic opportunities for universities and higher education that can be deployed now. A lot of the issues can be dealt with easily and at a pace of change everyone is comfortable with."

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>
> Graham Moss - The University of Bristol

The solution

At C3, we are aware of the reluctance of many higher education institutions to make this change, because they often believe it will be a costly and difficult process. As such, we have made sure to develop an easy-to-follow plan to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible.

For this reason, we have decided to implement a tailored solution, combining our Fusion IVR and Contact Centre solution. It is a converged platform supporting multiple communication channels, presenting messages to agents via one single interface.

Our Fusion platform is designed to be the most flexible and scalable graphical user interface to allow organisations to customise it to suit their needs and support their organisation's culture. The platform delivers voice messages to University of Bristol staff and to the IT department's helpdesk service with integrated mailboxes. It also offers a popular user web interface function to retrieve and manage calls and messages. Additionally, it features voice recognition for user portals in order to develop and deploy interactive voice response services, so university staff are now able to answer quickly to market demands.

Together, Fusion and our Contact platform can support voice-only systems or be extended to run seamlessly with multiple communication channels.

We also supplied the University of Bristol-affiliated Langford Veterinary Services with a technology upgrade to make inbound calls to the Equine Centre both quicker and smoother. This vital hotline offers access to specialist care for horse owners from all over the South West.

At C3, we understand the needs of the education sector. We know that durability and saving costs is crucial for universities, which is why our solution is cost-effective. In fact, we have a flexible and adaptable approach; clients only pay for what they use, with a one-off fee, and without recurring licences or long-term billing, to make the process easier and stress-free.

The result

The newer systems allow the University of Bristol to improve the performance and efficiency of all internal & external communications, including multi-channel helpdesks, student acquisition, retention and fundraising. The system allows staff to monitor calls and hot desk, with automated reports and wallboard statistics, allowing the efficient deployment of staff. Kevin Thomas, the telecommunications manager at the University of Bristol said: "We are very happy with C3. The reliability is great, and they are a pleasure to deal with. Nothing is too much trouble."

The solution improved students' engagement experience on the phone, whilst making the most of the clearing process. With these new systems, the University of Bristol is now able to handle large volumes of applicants effortlessly.

The University of Bristol's Graham Moss, praised the scripting features and added: "C3 Fusion gives us the ability to configure Interactive Scripts for various departments within the University, with an intuitive and user-friendly web interface. The text to speak function allows scripts to be demonstrated to the user before going live, then real voices recorded over these quickly and efficiently. It is a solid product, user-friendly, reliable and, when needed, the support team are quick to respond with a can-do attitude."

C3 and the University of Bristol are also examining the use of PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard) compliant technology to boost fundraising and donations from alumni in order to continue to add value to their infrastructures.

We have previously worked with the University of Bristol on their veterinary school call centre where our innovative contact platform was successfully deployed and we look forward to building on our successful partnership in the future as the system is extended to the IT helpdesk of the university.

This interesting project extends our university customer base which includes Cambridge and Oxford universities. Whatever your unique challenges, we have a solution for you. So, do not hesitate to contact us, we will be happy to help you with your project.