Case Study

Institute of Chartered Accountants Ireland

BT

Single solution for complex needs

Challenge

Serving the needs of 18,000 members and 5,000 students, Chartered Accountants Ireland is the largest accountancy body in the country. When it moved to a new, purpose built-HQ in Dublin, John Patton, Director of IT services, saw an opportunity to deploy a state-of-the-art IP network that could accommodate the organisation's diverse requirements.

As well as improve telephony and data services for the 150 staff who worked across offices in Dublin and Belfast, the organisation wanted to make the most of a new 1,300 seat training facility and develop a blended learning environment for its students using Unified Communications. The plan was to record lectures or stream them live over the web for people who were unable to attend.

None of this was possible with old communications infrastructure that was showing its age and becoming expensive to maintain. Built with disparate vendor equipment and supported with different service level agreements, there were obvious benefits in moving to a single IP network. Replacing five suppliers with a single service provider would relieve the technical burden, and a single point of contact would make it much easier to manage.

BT won the contract to design, deploy and manage a fast, resilient, high bandwidth network, integrating fixed and WiFi connectivity, and capable of supporting voice, data and streaming video.

"A combination of strong reference sites and competitive pricing persuaded us to go with BT," said Patton, "and the fact that they had a lot of experts in different fields. We needed that knowledge because we were crossing a number of different technologies and wanted to be sure that it would all integrate and be kept secure."

Benefits

A Cisco Gold Partner, BT was able to deploy a homogeneous network environment with end-to-end Cisco kit that could handle complex requirements while maintaining the highest levels of security and resilience.

Key components included a centralised call management system enabling greater manageability and integration between the two sites. Wireless was also important to the Institute, giving students and staff universal access, even from inside classrooms, at six times the speed of conventional access points. Built with several wireless controllers, there was always backup if one went down.

Redundancy was built into all the networks and access made easy through integrated single-sign on. Coming in from any network access point, students and staff used an ID password given to them by the Institute. At the same time, BT was careful to build the infrastructure to ensure segregation between the office and student networks.

"Security was a big issue," explained Brandon de Beer, Sales Specialist, BT. "The objective was to consolidate and simplify the communication platform but we had to control access internally as well as protect the network from the outside world."

From handling high-end applications to maintaining the 20MB internet line and the 4MB link between the Dublin and Belfast office, BT is now the one-stop shop for all of the Institution's needs.

"We are very pleased with the way the project went. BT has been a very strong partner," said Patton. "All the individuals involved in the planning, design and implementation demonstrated a high level of technical expertise."

BT