



Teams at University of Warwick can now collaborate regardless of location using Cisco WebEx.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: University of Warwick

Industry: Higher Education

Location: United Kingdom and international

Number of Employees: 5000 staff

Number of Students: over 21,000

Challenge

- Find easy-to-use, cost-effective, flexible solution for collaboration to meet increasing demand for informal meetings
- Provide single solution supported by IT department
- Reduce amount of travel, across campus or internationally

Solution

- Cisco WebEx Meeting Center, for interdepartmental collaboration and fast decision making

Results

- Dispersed departmental teams can collaborate with others regardless of location
- Enhanced teamwork through short, spontaneous meetings via Cisco WebEx technology
- Significant travel avoidance, increasing productivity and reducing costs

Challenge

Warwick is one of the U.K.'s leading universities, with an acknowledged reputation for excellence in research and teaching, innovation, and links with business and industry. Established in 1965 as part of a government initiative to expand access to higher education, Warwick was one of the first U.K. universities to develop close links with the business community, and has been successful in commercializing research.

In addition to its three main campuses, which lie across almost a four-mile site, the university also extends to buildings in the surrounding area, including a University Science Park and the Clinical Sciences Building (part of the Warwick Medical School, 10 miles away in Coventry).

Linking up the 5000 staff members across this dispersed campus has been one of the university's challenges. In the past, a number of dedicated video conferencing suites were set up, which worked well for large formal meetings. However, as the university grew, so did the demand for spontaneous informal meetings, especially across departments. A need arose for short "catch-ups," without having to book a video conferencing suite or to walk two miles to the main campus to meet face-to-face.

To meet the demand for frequent informal meetings, employees began to independently use Skype. Although this alternative provided a short-term solution, Skype was not a solution that IT Services could fully support.

Solution

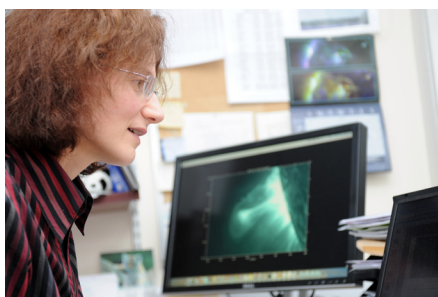
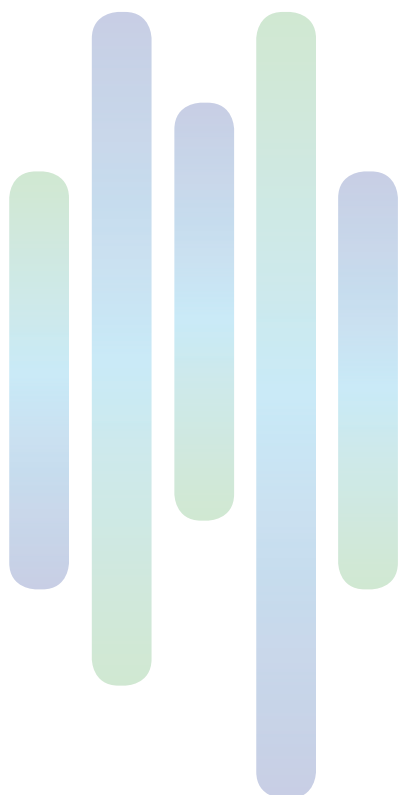
While considering its options, the university was replacing its network with Cisco® equipment. As part of that agreement, Cisco WebEx®, an online meetings tool, was introduced to the university. The software allows users to share their desktop, and to view videos and applications.

"We tested WebEx as part of the Cisco partnership, and it certainly was one of the best solutions we've seen," says Julian Chronicle, Collaboration and Email Services at the University of Warwick. The fact that WebEx is part of Cisco also reassured us of receiving a high level of service."



“Now that word has spread that web conferencing makes people’s lives easier and helps to get to a resolution faster, we’re seeing new uses of WebEx springing up every day.”

Julian Chronicle
Collaboration and Email Services Team
University of Warwick



Once the initial due diligence was carried out, Cisco WebEx technology was introduced to key people around the university for whom collaboration was an essential part of their job. This usage provided IT Services with valuable feedback as to whether the Cisco WebEx service would be useful and as to how it could be used.

Cisco Webex was introduced across the university via a series of presentations and online demonstrations, “The rollout has gone remarkably smoothly, and we currently have 300 active users, not including all our staff and students who have had one or two meetings via WebEx,” says Chronicle.

Results

One of the first departments to use Cisco WebEx was the university’s conference team. Their first few internal uses of WebEx were followed by a very public use of the technology when, in April 2010, a high-atmosphere volcanic ash cloud forced U.K. airspace to close in the middle of a busy conference season. A major conference was due to take place with the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH). The main keynote speaker was Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta, an internationally renowned paediatrician, who was travelling from Aga Kahn University in Pakistan.

“Having Dr. Bhutta speak at the conference was a major coup for the RCPCH,” says Simon Oke, system manager Warwick University Commercial Group, “and many people attended the conference just for his keynote speech. When the airspace was closed 24 hours before Dr. Bhutta was due to speak, he had only made it as far as Milan.”

Faced with the prospect of losing the conference’s keynote speaker, the team offered the use of Cisco WebEx, which was gratefully accepted. Dr. Bhutta’s presentation was successfully delivered, via WebEx, from his office in Milan to over 650 people in Warwick University’s Butterworth Hall.

“There were no technical issues, and it was a great success, and both Dr. Bhutta and the organizers were delighted that we had kept their program on track,” says Oke. “The organizers also commented that this flexibility was a deciding factor in using the University of Warwick for future events.”

One month later, 3500 “seats” for Cisco WebEx Meeting Center were made available across the entire university.

Ease of use and enabling short, spontaneous meetings have been two of the most significant benefits that have driven the adoption of Cisco WebEx across the university’s multiple departments, from the manufacturing group, and the medical school, to Warwick’s internationally renowned business school.

Another example is the dentistry school. Most of the tutors are in clinical practice, and time out of the practice to travel from their base in Leamington Spa to Warwick University is an expensive drain on their time. As a result, many of the lecturers use Cisco WebEx for tutorials with the MSc students dispersed throughout the United Kingdom and the European Union, particularly when giving presentations on PowerPoint. Similarly, one-to-one meetings with dentistry students to discuss their professional projects or dissertations are often undertaken using Cisco WebEx.

“Both the student and myself can view the same document,” says Bob Ireland, module leader, Warwick Dentistry, “and the use of arrow markers from me and the student enable us to easily identify the section we wish to discuss or amend. This has worked particularly well with our part-time postgraduate students, one of whom works in Valencia and another in Poland.” Cisco WebEx has also been successfully used for the Warwick Dentistry Board Meetings, enabling several clinical staff members to attend and input to the meeting via WebEx, where they would have otherwise been unable to do so.



Another department, the Warwick Institute of Advanced Study (IAS), used Cisco WebEx to interview a candidate for a Junior Research Fellowship. The candidate was living in Australia and could not afford to fly over for an interview. The IT team set up the Institute with a Cisco WebEx account that day and a tutorial on how to use it. Chronicle heard back from the IAS that “the interview all went very smoothly; the technology is impressive and will definitely be used again for that purpose.”

Next steps

With Cisco WebEx quickly becoming embedded in the working lives of many of the university’s business, administrative, and tutorial staff, the next step is for WebEx to be incorporated into teaching and learning across campus. For example, future demand will encompass lectures being recorded via WebEx and uploaded online for students to watch at a later date.

“Take-up has been fairly organic. Now that word has spread that web conferencing makes people’s lives easier and helps to get to a resolution faster, we’re seeing new uses of WebEx springing up every day,” says Chronicle.

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco WebEx, go to: www.cisco.com/go/webex

To read other success stories, go to: www.cisco.com/go/webexcasestudies.

To provide feedback or participate in the WebEx customer reference program, email: real.results@webex.com.

Product List

- Cisco WebEx Meeting Center



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