Regent's College London

Historic University Prepares for the Future with Aerohive Wi-Fi Solution

Challenges

- Delivering best of breed learning tools to its highly-expectant, and rapidly growing student base, is essential - technology plays a critical role in this.
- Regent's College wanted to offer its students and staff uninterrupted and secure wireless access throughout the campus and conference centre.
- The IS department was also experiencing a high demand for Wi-Fi access from students who were moving away from traditional laptop devices and starting to use smart devices.

Results

- The capability to cope with the huge influx of smart devices coming onto the network from students, staff and guests to the College and conference centre as well as the increase of traffic on the network.
- External APs mean students can log on to the Internet, browse and access applications, such as Blackboard VLE and Citrix XenDesktop, in some of the outside areas if they wish.
- Providing students with reliable Wi-Fi is improving the learning experience, as well as the tools needed to network with peers and communicate with relatives and friends.

Regent's College London is the UK's largest not-for-profit college of higher education. It comprises seven schools under the umbrella of two faculties as well as a conference centre, and is based in central London. The College prides itself on being able to offer everything students need to fulfil their academic and personal potential.

The College has over 3,500 full-time students - 90 per cent of which are international. It specialises in International Business, Arts and Humanities and offers a wide range of courses, including British and American degrees at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Upon graduation its alumni are in high demand from large private and public sector organisations and attract high-paid career prospects.

Regent's College Conference Centre bears host to an array of events every year - ranging from seminar and meeting rooms to large conferences for up to 500 delegates - both private and corporate.

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> **—Mick Heath,**
> Network and Infrastructure Manager, Regent's College

WLAN Network Challenges

As a private college renowned for its professionalism and internationalism, delivering best of breed learning tools to its highly-expectant student base is essential. Technology plays a critical role in this and works as a foundation for the College's on-going development plans.

Already equipped with the latest learning resources, such as Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), as well as 24/7 access to IT facilities and support, the College wanted to offer its students and staff uninterrupted and secure wireless access throughout the campus and conference centre.

The existing controller-based 3com wireless network was unable to offer the quality of service the College needed at this scale so the Information Services (IS) department began outlining its requirements. Carlos Nogueira, Head of IS Department at Regent's College London, explains:

"As a private college touting professionalism and internationalism, delivering best of breed learning tools to our highly-expectant, and rapidly growing student base, is essential. The requirement was not just for web browsing but also to accommodate the needs of faculties delivering courses through a VLE environment, such as Blackboard. We needed a WLAN solution which would scale to accommodate all of our business and teaching needs.

"I was approached by the CEO and Principal Professor Aldwyn Cooper with a five-year wireless and mobility strategy. Providing students with ubiquitous business-grade Internet access throughout lecture halls, libraries and communal areas was our priority."

Mick Heath, Network and Infrastructure Manager at Regent's College London, continues, "It was imperative that we could offer students the same quality of service expect to find when they eventually enter the world of work. The 3com wireless network, already in place, wasn't cost efficient and created huge management overheads. It was also unable to provide the speed and quality of performance we wanted to achieve."

The IS department was also experiencing a high demand for Wi-Fi access from students who were moving away from traditional laptop devices and starting to use mobile internet devices. The College wanted a wireless network that would allow them to operate a secure, easy to manage, future-proof network that could support smart phone adoption and meet students' growing expectations.

Heath continues, "Students began bringing smart devices, such as iPads and BlackBerrys, on campus. Previously they were unable to log on to the network because we didn't have the management capabilities. It was important that we found a WLAN solution that would allow us to provide reliable access to all students regardless of what device they were using."

The Aerohive Wi-Fi Solution

Regent's College London assessed WLAN solutions from Aerohive and Meru, but chose Aerohive based on its ability to scale with the college's ambitions and compelling price point.

"Aerohive's forward-thinking and innovative technology complements our mission to provide best-of-breed learning resources to our students. From an IT perspective, we recognised the benefits of a centrally managed network. Aerohive's linear pricing model was also a factor in our decision and means we have more financial leeway than before – having the flexibility to add APs as and when we need them wasn't an option with controller based solutions," explains Heath.

The IS team began a campus-wide implementation with HiveAPs being rolled out to classrooms, and comunal areas. Through Aerohive's centralised management platform, Regent's is also able to provide guest access for visitors to the college. Heath continues:

"We've successfully installed HiveAPs into lecture halls, as well as some study and social areas. We've also started to implement external APs so students can log on to the Internet, browse and access applications, such as Blackboard VLE and Citrix XenDesktop, in some of the outside areas if they wish to. This hasn't created any additional demand on our IT team though - HiveManager enables us to manage and control the network and user access - using many automated tools - from one location.

"Meanwhile, the user profiling function means we can easily and quickly authorise guest, student and staff access according to their specific needs without any added management overhead."

Aerohive WLAN Solution Benefits

Regent's College London successfully implemented the Aerohive WLAN with the help of trusted IT partner, LAN3, and now has the capability to cope with the huge influx of smart devices coming onto the network from students, staff and guests to the College and conference centre.

Heath explains, "70 per cent of devices used by students are now mobile internet devices. The Aerohive WLAN means we're able to welcome these devices and cope with the increase of traffic on the network from students, staff and guests. Providing students with reliable Wi-Fi is improving the learning experience, as well as the tools needed to network with peers and communicate with relatives and friends."

Moving forward, the College plans to roll out the WLAN across the campus. Heath concludes, "Our intention is to provide wireless access anywhere and everywhere. The scalability of Aerohive's WLAN makes it easy - we can simply add and configure HiveAPs as and when we need them. The final phase of the roll-out will take place during April 2012 and will see the college fully equipped with a campus-wide WLAN solution."

Nogueira concludes, "Our investment in Aerohive means we don't have to worry about what new technologies are thrown at us. We have confidence that we can grow as a college, and as a business, and that our network can grow with us - the sky's the limit as far as our Wi-Fi goes."