

## **NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY & PHILIPS PROVIDE A LESSON IN DECT**

*Building upon its international status by providing a supportive quality educational environment to its students is Northumbria University's mission - and one in which DECT technology from Philips Business Communications has a vital role to play.*

The University of Northumbria is one of the largest in the UK, providing over 300 study programmes to more than 23,000 students across four campuses in Newcastle, Northumberland and Carlisle. Ranked as one of the top 20 universities in the country for the excellence of its teaching and the quality of its research, Northumbria's commitment to becoming a leading international university has helped it to win the accolade of the Sunday Times' Best Modern University for two consecutive years.

As an institution renowned for its dynamism it should be no surprise that Northumbria was one of the first universities in the country to recognise how DECT (digitally enhanced cordless telephony) would enable it to streamline costs, boost efficiency and enhance the supportive environment it provides to its students. When the University decided to install a DECT system it chose to call upon a fellow leader in its field - Philips Business Communications.

### **Keeping staff on the move in touch**

Northumbria operates across four campuses, with two in the heartland of Newcastle - one in the bustling city centre, and a Coach Lane Campus on the outskirts that is recognised as one of the foremost training centres for nurses in the North-East. It was the University's decision to expand this Coach Lane site that prompted it to review its existing communications system and how effectively it supported its staff and students.

Andrew Walls, Telecommunications Manager at Northumbria University, explained, "Trying to track down a member of staff on campus is traditionally time-consuming and frustrating. You end up searching lecture halls, seminar rooms and libraries, or you leave numerous messages in their office to call you. Even with our paging system you were still left waiting for the person to get back in touch, so staff would resort to calling mobiles - and that was proving expensive. We needed an equally direct but more cost-effective means of communication."

When Northumbria reviewed its various options it soon determined that the benefits of DECT were clear.

Mr Walls said, "With DECT you get direct communication but at a fraction of the cost of calling a mobile and with far superior reception - plus all the features and functionality of a desktop telephone. The technology was still new in education at that time, however, and if we were going to be a DECT pioneer we needed to choose a supplier with proven technology and a track record of similar successful projects. That's why we chose Philips Business Communications."

## **Improved accessibility, better reception using DECT**

To streamline the communications infrastructure at Coach Lane Philips Business Communications installed just one SOPHO iS3070 Application Server at the main site and laid cables under the road to the new building to connect the two campuses. This enabled the two sites to operate as a single network and staff to be allocated just one DECT handset and one extension that could operate across both locations.

Northumbria has now also replaced its paging system and equipped just under 200 of its staff with Philips DECT C922 handsets that enable them to make and receive calls from either Coach Lane site. These handsets also provide access to all the advanced features of the Philips SOPHO platform, including Direct Dial In (DDI) and voicemail.

Mr Walls said, "With the Philips DECT solution we've gained 100% coverage, 100% clear and reliable reception and removed the need for staff to use mobile phones on campus, which has slashed our overall communications costs. These are savings we can quantify - but we're also getting immeasurable value from being able to get hold of our staff whenever we want and wherever they are."

He continued, "Since we introduced DECT we've seen projects completed faster because staff can organise workgroups on the move and collaborate with their colleagues more quickly and easily than they could in the past. Being able to pool expertise in this way undoubtedly filters through to the quality of our teaching and our research - and when we have an emergency we are reminded yet again how irreplaceable DECT is."

## **Building upon an enviable reputation**

With DECT so successfully installed at the Coach Lane site Northumbria is now considering using the technology throughout all its campuses.

Mr Walls concluded, "Like businesses, universities are under constant pressure to maximise their resources and operate as efficiently as possible. With the DECT solution from Philips Business Communications we have been able to improve our internal communications, enhance the effectiveness of our staff and ensure we provide the very best service to our students. At the end of the day it is their happiness and success that determines our reputation and ensures we continue to stand out from other universities."

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## **Pull-Out Quotes:**

### **Front Page:**

"If we were going to be a DECT pioneer we needed to choose a supplier with proven technology and a track record of similar successful projects. That's why we chose Philips Business Communications."

Andrew Walls, Telecommunications Manager, Northumbria University

### **Back Page:**

"With the Philips DECT solution we've gained 100% coverage, 100% clear and reliable reception and slashed our overall communications costs."

### **Solution Overview:**

#### **Challenge:**

- To connect two separate campuses with one single networked communications solution.
- To ensure staff are directly contactable whenever and wherever required to enable collaborative working and immediate access in case of emergency.
- To cut communications costs by replacing paging system and reducing need to call mobile phones

#### **Philips Solution:**

Platform:	1 x Philips SOPHO iS3070 Application Server
Networking:	?
Systems Management:	?
Desktop:	? - voicemail?
Mobility:	Philips iSMobile with ( <i>how many?</i> ) radio base stations and ( <i>how many?</i> ) DECT C922 handsets

#### **Key Benefits:**

- Expansion of existing campus to two sites without need for duplicating communications infrastructure, with single networked solution serving both locations.
- DECT cordless telephony replacing paging system and providing 100% clear and reliable reception, increasing contactability with staff on the move and reducing need for costly calls to mobile phones.
- Networked solution providing 100% coverage of both sites and enabling staff to be allocated one handset and one extension operational at either location.
- Access via DECT handsets to advanced telephony features including DDI and voicemail.
- Improved contactability providing direct access to staff in case of emergency and facilitating collaborative working, increasing staff efficiency and productivity.
- Efficient communications providing supportive environment and service to students and maintaining and enhancing the University's reputation.

*For more information please contact:*

**Philips Business Communications**

**Tel: +44 (0) 1223 468777**

**Fax: +44 (0) 1223 468490**

**Or visit our Web site at: [www.sopho.philips.com](http://www.sopho.philips.com)**