From Leeds and London to Hong Kong and Hyderabad: connecting and protecting multiple campuses for the University of Law

The challenge
The University of Law (ULaw) is one of the UK’s longest established specialist providers of legal and business education. It is also the largest – and growing 25% each year – with nine UK campuses, partnerships with the universities of Reading, Exeter, Liverpool, Sheffield, Chester, Newcastle and East Anglia, international campuses in Berlin and Hong Kong plus an office in Hyderabad, India.

With more than 10,000 students, around one thousand staff members and hundreds of visiting lecturers, across a wide portfolio of full-time, part-time and online courses, its IT support demands are immense. They are also costly, especially as ULaw was using a traditional network provider that was more expensive than Jisc for less bandwidth and fewer additional services.

That all changed when the Janet Network became available to alternative providers like ULaw – to the relief of Tom Brady, chief information officer at ULaw.

“This is my first role in education and speaking to people before I came in, everyone talked about how the Janet Network was the network to be on because of the benefits it brought, but we just hadn’t had the option up until that point. I was very keen to move on it when we knew that the doors were opening,” he says.

The solution
ULaw became one of the first alternative providers to join the Janet network and it has made the most of the comprehensive set of services on offer, from the network itself to cybersecurity.

"Having the extra layers of DDoS protection and management by Jisc gives us that extra layer of comfort and backup that our network’s being monitored 24/7, where we don’t have that staff cover. We know that if there was to be any particularly suspicious traffic on our network, we would be alerted and we could react if we needed to. We didn’t have that level of support before," says Tom.
“We knew by getting on board with Jisc, we were going to tap into some further benefits. Jisc offers more functionalities in terms of purchasing power and discounts with some of the big providers, such as Microsoft for Azure and Cisco. We’ve talked about learning analytics and staff digital capabilities. These are the types of things that you wouldn’t get from a traditional network provider,” he adds.

In addition, as ULaw’s trusted supplier, Jisc now carries out its annual cyber penetration tests and has just supported the university to achieve the valued Cyber Essentials Plus certification.

Jisc experts also hooked up the office in Hyderabad, sourcing the network connections and presenting the commercial case. “Doing the leg work,” as Tom puts it. The support and guidance offered by Jisc’s account managers was critical to the process, including their help to build the business case that enabled the project to be signed off at the executive level.

“The Jisc account managers have always been very, very attentive to our needs and responded very well. They’ve always tried to fit to our needs if we asked for something slightly different in terms of the bandwidth we required or certain things that we needed doing on our configuration to make it more resilient. They were always very supportive of that.”

Benefits
For Tom Brady, the move to the Janet Network has brought peace of mind.

“For me, I know that I’ve got a stable service that I can rely on. I’ve got a third-party provider who is always monitoring that for me, keeping me abreast of things. That’s the most important bit for me. I also know that I have bandwidth and capacity so that I can introduce new applications. I know I can do that comfortably without worrying about performance and network speed and network traffic. That enables me to react to business requirements quickly. Whereas, if I’d had to plan that capacity in the old scenario, I could have been slowing down the development for the business,” he explains.

The increase in uptime compared to ULaw’s previous provider and the fact that any maintenance is scheduled for out of hours, so it has no impact on the business, all points to what, for Tom, is a fundamental difference with Jisc’s service.

“Jisc understands the challenges that we have in academia. They understand that the student must be at the centre of everything and that we must always have a service available,” he concludes.

To find out how Jisc can support your organisation, please:

Contact: customer.support@jisc.ac.uk
or visit: jisc.ac.uk/customers

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