

Project name: Campus wide Wi-Fi installation

Quick facts	
Project value	£1 million
Client name	The University of Reading
Work start date	28 th October 2013
Completion date	August 2014
UoR project manager	David Young ☎ Ext 6635 📧 d.g.r.young @reading.ac.uk
Wren no.	1454232

Project stakeholders

Client :- The University of Reading, IT Services

Contractors : Southern Electric Contracting

For the University :- David Young

Existing situation: The demand for Wi-Fi services is reaching unprecedented levels. The University's desire for up-to-date services necessitated improving the network. As a caveat, most devices nowadays do not have a hard-line network port rendering the old Ethernet cable obsolete.

Project brief: One of the 6 priorities outlined by the Technology Enhanced Learning Group was to open up new ways to deliver teaching and learning across the University. Subsequently, creating a campus-wide Wi-Fi network was given the go ahead.

Project benefits: Wi-Fi services allow for innovative teaching and learning services, for example, the TEL (Technology Enhanced Learning) project. It keeps the University at the forefront of providing high quality teaching and learning facilities, as well as letting students have access to the internet on any device, anywhere on campus.

Progress/work schedule: Dave wrote an initial proposal, submitted it, and had it approved within one week. As a result, the project hit the ground running. One drawback to this speed was that quotations were coming in for infrastructure quickly and in phases. This represented a risk to the project, along with fears that performance wouldn't meet the expected design potential, the external Wi-Fi kits would be too expensive, and that the growth of Wi-Fi devices would be exponential. Fortunately, in terms of the quotations, after 4 months, they had all been received, so that element of risk was removed. That being said, Dave regularly submitted

monthly progress reports to the Project Committee, advising on programme, cost and risk in order to mitigate any problems.

After many early starts, late finishes and weekend working, as well as a few technical difficulties (when is a project without these?) the project was completed, within schedule and within budget. All academic buildings across campus now have Wi-Fi, as well as London Road, Greenlands, Eat @ the Square and the Museum of Rural Life (MERL.)

Did you know: Due to the usage of students and staff, a scale of prioritisation was developed, detailing which buildings would have Wi-Fi and when. The Library benefitted first, paving the way for the further planned refurbishments.

The Wi-Fi set-up allows for an estimated 3-5 year growth in the use of smart devices. Currently, the format allows for video streaming, internet browsing- anything you would expect of a home Broadband system- and features speeds between 12-25mbps, supporting an average class size of 40-60 students.

Several external areas of the University- the area around Mojos Bar, the quad area outside the Library, and the area near Earley Gate- will benefit from external Wi-Fi capabilities, allowing access to the internet whilst enjoying the weather. Housed in CCTV like casings, these devices will project cone shaped areas of effect, and bar interference from the good old British weather, will provide speeds similar to that indoors.