

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND (WITS UNIVERSITY)

The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits University) is a public sector organisation and the largest educational institution in Johannesburg, South Africa. Wits celebrated its centenary and is internationally distinguished for research, high academic standards, and commitment to social justice in Africa and beyond. Wits University has five faculties, 33 schools, and two campuses over 400 acres. There are over 8,000 employees and stakeholders, including over 2,000 students and 17 residences for student accommodation.

**MEA****Education****All Sizes****Premise**

AT A GLANCE

Wits University's ageing analogue communications system was no longer supported and was costly to manage. In addition to an outdated communications solution, the University required the new solution be deployed with minimal disruption to campus life. The educational intake for Wits is in March, so the project needed to be rolled out between semesters when the students and lecturers were away.

GOALS

Wits sought to migrate to a modern IP solution that could deliver customer experience (CX), mobility, scalability, and stakeholder satisfaction. They initially approached the market to investigate technology capabilities and vendor stability to modernise their telecommunications and upgrade to a comprehensive, unified communications (UC) solution.

The main objective was to move away from analogue and digital telephony devices. Wits needed to pivot to a modern UC solution that delivers 'Work from Anywhere', which was important during the COVID-19 pandemic and necessary for hybrid work.

A local Distributor who has worked with Mitel for over 15 years was selected as the local technology partner for this project and ongoing support for the Wits.

RESULTS

The project deployed in phases over four months, avoiding the registration period and causing minimal interruption. The modernised Mitel Unified Communications and Collaboration (UCC) solution provides Wits University with a highly scalable and resilient infrastructure optimised for hybrid working. It is located within Wits' two data centres with centralised operators, UCC and IP endpoints.

MiVoice Business and MiCollab solutions were selected to level up the University's communications to a centralised system with VoIP devices. MiContact Center – with high availability architecture with no single point of failure – was also deployed to handle all student communications and enrolment queries.

Mitel Teleworker and Sip-Trunking enabled remote working, and MiCollab on mobile can be accessed from anywhere with high connectivity over a secure connection. The migration to SIP trunks achieved significant savings and reductions in ongoing SAL support costs. The return on investment over five years will be substantial, as all software can now be supported remotely, and no onsite fixes are required any longer.

Mitel Border Gateway for Secure Recording Connection links the contact centre to a recording solution for compliance and an enhanced CX. The Mitel solution offers extended visibility to the various contact centres, and the modern omnichannel contact centre solution has improved the overall student experience.

Other solution elements included integration to a Telephone Management System that manages and monitors call accounting with budget barring, Microsoft Teams, social media, and CRM integrations for subsequent phases.

Wits has over 8,100 active users, including 6,600 MiCollab users, 54 voice agents, and InAttend operator consoles. Of all the stakeholders, there are about 2,000 students with IP phones in their residential rooms or about 20% of the user community. Seamless user mobility with feature enhancements and the migration to a full IP solution enabled reliable and secure communication services to student residences.

The video, collaboration, and mobility technologies deliver a seamless user experience, whether on campus or remote working, improving productivity and communication. Wits University now enjoys a next-generation, highly scalable, resilient, and centralised UCC solution.

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Our main drivers were to upgrade and enhance the legacy analogue telephony systems to allow all stakeholders – including internal support staff, academic staff, and students - to use any device, from

anywhere, at any time. Cost savings were also a big consideration as the legacy system required substantial maintenance and internal resources.

- Dr. Stanley Mpofu, CIO, Wits University

PRODUCTS

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