

Smooth ending to ICT refurbishment project



Vision Australia's building in Kooyong was due for a total refurbishment. Honeylight Consulting was engaged to work on the ICT components, which included moving the data centre to a new floor as well as designing and rolling out a new networking and Wi-Fi solution for the entire building.

Organisation

- Vision Australia is the largest provider of services to people with blindness and low vision across Australia including Seeing Eye Dogs. They work with and support more than 25,500 people through 35 centres across Australia and have 700 employees and approximately 2000 volunteers.

Challenge

- Complete refurbishment of Vision Australia's national head office building in Kooyong, Victoria with state-of-the-art design and best practice in accessibility for people who are blind or have low vision, both as employees and clients of Vision Australia.
- Use the latest technology to make the head office the most accessible office in Australia.
- Create 20 meeting rooms each fitted with videoconferencing units.
- Move the data centre to a different floor and rebuild from scratch with minimal shutdown time during changeover.
- Upgrade the network and Wi-Fi and create a more accountable and auditable guest Wi-Fi process.

Solution

- Honeylight Consulting appointed to plan, design, stage, configure, implement and support new networking and Wi-Fi systems in conjunction with building works.
- Selection of a range of HPe/Aruba switches and hardware.
- Honeylight staff to project manage the changeover and go-live of the new data centre.
- Ongoing support following completion to fine-tune the environment.
- Move half of the building's occupants to another location while it was worked on. After this was completed, the other half was moved until that section was completed.
- Measures tailored for people who are blind or have low vision such as tactile maps and displays with audible content that activates with touch, along with high contrast tactile elements, braille and specialist lighting.

Result

- Vision Australia's refurbished head office is one of the most accessible in Australia.
- The IT infrastructure work was completed on time and on budget.
- Zero outages during the data centre changeover and minimal downtime..
- Videoconferences have risen from 200 a month to 1300 a month, saving considerably on travel costs.
- Management of the Wi-Fi governance process is streamlined and accountable to a user, as well as being more secure.

"I'm very pleased with Honeylight Consulting because they delivered what they promised within the given time period. They configured the systems to our requirement and had plenty of skilled engineers and support staff available to make everything happen when needed."

Senaka Mapa
Manager IT Operations and
Infrastructure, Vision Australia





The hot-desk area allows a fast and reliable connection to the network: staff can just plug in their computer, login and start work.

Wireless security risks rectified

Honeylight was selected for the Vision Australia project because of its specialist expertise in wireless and switching technology and effective Wi-Fi solutions.

The threat of security risks was a reality with Vision Australia's old Wi-Fi network, which allowed guests to login via a general ID and password.

"There was no accountability," Vision Australia Manager IT operations and infrastructure Senaka Mapa said. "We could have 300 guest sessions running at the one time using a standard ID and not have any idea who they were.

"We just knew a login was in use at a particular time and could see that someone had perhaps downloaded large files but we had no way of tracking them down.

"To reduce our risk and provide us with an auditable process, the new system installed by Honeylight means when a guest arrives at our office they just need to find an employee who will sponsor them and a request is submitted via email to the IT Department. Approval is given straight away, which allows the visitor to access the Wi-Fi.

"Guests are given an auto generated one-time-user ID and password and the system lets us know at any time who they are and who sponsored them. It's running very smoothly and provides beneficial governance controls."

Data centre on the move

Relocating the data centre from one floor to another was another challenge Honeylight was instrumental in accomplishing without any major downtime.

Existing equipment had to be moved and updated hardware installed.

The shutdown of the old data centre and turning on of the new one had to be implemented efficiently.

"We only had a small window. You can't have multiple shutdowns and can't shut it down for a long period of time. This meant it was only possible after hours or on weekends," Senaka said.

"With a team of 15 people working at different times from a Friday night to Monday morning we achieved the task. The people who made it happen comprised our own team, Honeylight engineers and technicians, and a couple of contractors.

"The work included getting everything mounted, installed, configured and tested.

"The contractors mainly worked on our hot-desking environment, setting up the desks, new monitors and keyboards. The purpose of this is that anyone can walk up to any desk, plug in their computer and it's all connected straight away to their credentials and works. And it does, seamlessly!"



20 meeting rooms, such as this one in the library, have been fitted out with state-of-the-art collaboration media tools.

SUMMARY

"Everything runs well and we're very happy with the support that Honeylight continued to provide post implementation," Senaka said.

"We did not have any outages and no major issues arose while we got the system up and running. It was a smooth transition.

"However, our focus was not just on making sure the ICT refit was a success, but it had to be accessible for people with blindness or low vision. This meant from the ground up the design had to take into account the space around equipment and desks for easy access. Tactiles were installed that are used by people with canes and we had to make sure TV screens and lights are the right brightness depending on which area is being lit. All this was achieved and is working well."