



Polycom solution delivers lesson in roaming communication for Lausanne nursery schools

A DECT wireless telephony solution from Polycom is supporting staff in their highly mobile jobs by enabling roaming communication that improves efficiency and maintains safety.

The Challenge

To provide a flexible, robust, roaming communication solution for staff at six nurseries operated by the City of Lausanne that has good integration with the school's existing VoIP platform.

The Solution

Polycom's DECT wireless telephony solution based on the KIRK Wireless Server 600v3 with multiple wireless handsets at each nursery school location.

The Results

Increased mobility has improved employee flexibility and overall efficiency. It also impacts on health and safety considerations by allowing better control and communication in emergency situations from anywhere on site.

Children being children means they are always on the move, always demanding attention and always needing supervision. For staff at any school, let alone under-five year olds at nursery school, keeping control while maintaining communication with the grown-up world is critical. For the city-run nursery schools in Lausanne, Switzerland, the problem is multiplied by six – this being the number of nursery schools within its authority. Typically, carers within these schools are always on the go – escorting children from the classrooms to the playground, supervising outdoor activities and moving between buildings. During a working day, if someone needs to get in touch with them, they have to be found within the school grounds and taken to the nearest telephone.

"Obviously this scenario isn't ideal," admits City of Lausanne Telecoms Administrator, Philippe Blasutto. "We have a centralised Cisco CallManager VoIP platform system to meet our call processing requirements. This is fine for managing calls throughout all our sites around the city, but doesn't, in itself, deliver the roaming capability we so desperately needed. As a result, we were looking for a communication solution that would build on our existing VoIP platform. One that would give nursery school staff the ability to watch the children indoors or outdoors while still being available for phone calls from parents, outside authorities or other members of staff."

Having previously installed an earlier version of a KIRK base station, the City of Lausanne knew the benefits of a mobile telephony solution. However, there were options available – the main contender being a WiFi solution. After a careful review of the features and functionality of both roaming telephony solutions, Philippe Blasutto learnt that the DECT-over-IP solution delivered more robust roaming capabilities within the school environment so decided to implement the KIRK 600v3 solution.

"We are very happy with our choice and the subsequent operations of the KIRK 600v3 solution throughout our locations."

The KIRK 600v3 solution is certified to operate with the existing VoIP platform. Built on the international DECT standard (Digital Enhanced Cordless Telecommunications) the KIRK 600v3 solution works with most enterprise communication systems through either an analogue, T1 or IP interface. The modular nature of the Polycom system allows users to expand coverage, voice traffic and number of users easily as needed while protecting the initial investment.

The KIRK 600v3 solution delivers:

- Exceptional voice quality
- Robust security based on DECT standard
- Support for repeaters to easily expand the radio coverage area
- Seamless handover between base stations and repeaters to assure uninterrupted calls
- Automatic login of the handsets between installations for site-to-site roaming
- Text messaging and application integration for improved productivity

Consequently Philippe Blasutto installed a KIRK 600v3 solution that would connect six nursery schools and integrate over IP connection with the existing VoIP platform.

"The KIRK 600v3 solution not only gives us better coverage through all the thick walls and obstructions in place at many of our nursery schools," continues Philippe Blasutto, "but also gives us a greater user population as well as the ability to scale up the coverage with repeaters located around the sites."

The nursery school project capitalised on the flexibility of this new Polycom solution by adopting a mix of single and multi-cell installations with a number of repeaters used on each site. A single-cell nursery school would nevertheless still have the ability to connect up to 35 cordless roaming handsets. Multi-cell locations, with two or more KIRK servers on site, would benefit from a much larger user-base – up to a maximum of 1500 handsets – more than enough for even the largest nursery school.

One of the schools, the 'Centre de vie Enfantine de la Cité', is housed in historic old buildings in the 'old town' of Lausanne. With a population of 68 children plus 16 carers and two administrators, this nursery school represents a typical single-cell location with one KIRK 600v3 server and two repeaters to improve geographical coverage across the 700 m² site.

"Because these systems are so modular and flexible, we will have no hesitation in upgrading and adding to them as and when requirements change."

Since its installation in early 2008, the new KIRK 600v3 roaming telephony solution has paid dividends to the city authority and users alike in terms of time saved having to answer calls, improved efficiency leading to greater control of the children and their subsequent improved safety.

Madame Simone Raeber, a carer at the 'Centre de Vie Enfantine de la Cite', was enthusiastic in her praise of the new system: "With the new roaming handsets, we do not have to make a choice between being tied to the school buildings or to the children outside. We can walk everywhere, looking after the children, feeling safe in the knowledge that we have instant communication with the outside world clipped to our belts. It's a great feeling to be in control like this."

Future plans

Part of the City of Lausanne implementation was rolling out the Polycom solution to a couple of water works at St Sulpice and Lutry operated by the city. At these locations, water works employees would benefit from the same robust roaming capabilities of the system but mainly for reasons of mobility and efficiency/productivity rather than for any safety issues. These installations were necessarily larger than the nursery school solutions due to the larger geographical areas of the water works. Consequently St Sulpice works had four KIRK 600v3 servers and seven repeaters installed. The Lutry site has eight KIRK 600v3 servers and six repeaters.

After these two locations were up and running and delivering robust roaming benefits to the employees, a further City of Lausanne institution was subsequently added – bringing the total of KIRK 600v3 sites to date for the City of Lausanne to nine.

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