

## Case study: A new telephony system for Easton and Otley College

### 1. What was the challenge?

In the context of colleges merging across the UK, it is vital they establish a **reliable way of procuring new equipment**. Easton College and Otley College merged on 1 August 2012. The two sites are located 45 miles apart, with around 800 staff employed in total. A significant number of staff work at both sites, which meant they needed to publish two landline numbers plus a business mobile number.

Jono West, Director of Funding, Reporting Services and IT at the college, says, “Both colleges had telephone systems that didn’t suit our business needs. We needed a **cost-effective way of helping us upgrade**.” Virtualising the system was the next step in bringing the sites together and enabling staff to work in a more joined-up way.

### 2. How did we solve it?

On a regular visit to the college, the Jisc account manager mentioned Jisc’s telephony purchasing service. From there, Jono says, “The whole project went well. Jisc helped **structure the tender**, based on the identification of needs, and supported us through the procurement process.”

Using the [Telephony Purchasing Service](#), Jisc **pre-qualified the suppliers** to ensure they met the college’s requirements, thereby freeing up staff time. Jisc’s stringent processes comply with EU procurement rules so the College could be assured that the suppliers chosen would provide them with the best value for money and quality of service. Using Jisc’s framework, the college were able to narrow down their choice to four suppliers, who visited the college to pitch for the work. Jisc offered **technical advice**, and then attended the college for two days to sit in on the supplier presentations and assist with the choosing of a supplier, ensuring everything was compliant and making sure the supplier could actually deliver what they had proposed.

Jono says, “Jisc was very good at what I call ‘check and challenge’. We then made decisions and Jisc’s telephony specialist informed procurement, so that we could go forward with planning the implementation.”

Jono concludes, “From a college perspective it was **the easiest procurement I’ve done**. The whole thing was very professional – for instance, Jisc collected suppliers’ queries, so we needed only a single point of contact here in the college to deal with those - and Jisc then published the answers to the suppliers.”

### 3. What were the benefits to the organisational IT/ research reputation/ teaching, learning and assessment or other area?

The procurement process meant that the system came in **significantly under budget**, which the college then used to invest in a **more comprehensive system** than they had originally sought to procure. As a result, more staff now have their own direct dial numbers.

The results have been immediate. Jono says, “A lot of staff are complimenting me on the new system.” Staff now find it easier to reach people and there is **greater functionality** – for example, by using the new software, Microsoft Communicator, staff save time by using recent call lists and building their own address books.

The college also benefits from the reassurance of **fast and reliable data transfer over the Janet network**. Jono says, “We have existing relationships with external consultants who we could have worked with on this procurement - but that would have cost more. Also, we didn’t feel we had the same level of control over the process; sometimes the service that is offered and what is provided don’t quite match. In contrast the Jisc Telephony Purchasing Service was a very cost-effective service. **What we commissioned and what we got was 100% right for us.**”

## 4. What were the benefits to business efficiency, and other savings?

Using Jisc services **saved the college approximately two months** of time compared to them running a full OJEU (Official Journal of the European Journal) procurement themselves, with the added benefit that the Jisc service is compliant with this EU directive.

## 5. How are Jisc adding value to this work? How does it tie in with other products and services on offer?

Reflecting on the value of having a named account manager who introduced him to the service, Jono says, “We are in frequent conversation with our Jisc account manager who is hugely helpful and often points me to the right person. I think she does a really good job. She’s been very **proactive for our college**; she’s got to know where we are and what we want to do and she keeps current.”

## 6. More information

Find out more about [Jisc’s Telephony Purchasing Service](#).  
[Explore what Jisc do for colleges](#) through their subscription.