



An opportunity to write a new chapter in Whitcoulls history.

The book trade has a distinguished past, but it's also been one of the key drivers in the new economy. So although Whitcoulls' is one of the oldest presences in New Zealand retail, it understands well the role ICT has to play in maintaining its pre-eminent position. When it asked TelstraClear to pitch for its business, it was obvious that innovation would be a big part of any successful tender.

Ideally, Whitcoulls needed a comprehensive solution

The backbone of Whitcoulls' business is the 85 Whitcoulls and Bennetts stores that it owns around New Zealand, 44 of which are in the three major cities. Partners Angus & Robertson have 115 company and 70 franchise stores in the Australian market. Systems Support Group (SSG) Manager Maureen Maloy explains the demands on a communications supplier:

"My job is to support the entire A&R Whitcoulls Group. I'm very focused on reducing costs of ownership, so I'm looking for partners I can work with on an ongoing basis who are up to speed with technology and understand our capital investments. We're doing this via hardware and software vendors, standardising as much as possible across the group and ideally finding single trans-Tasman partners."

A system for the organisation and for its customers

Online book sales in New Zealand don't represent significant competition for Whitcoulls at present, but that situation will change. The company needs the capability

Client: Whitcoulls

Business: Retail chain selling books, magazines, stationery and DVDs.

Problem: A slow and outdated Nortel phone system was not meeting the communications challenges of the 21st century.

Solution: Total convergence with a Cisco AVVID system for voice and data.

Outcome: Whitcoulls enjoys cost-savings, new efficiencies and infinite potential for the future.



to deal with customers online, which means searching as well as ordering. "Whitcoulls is in the entertainment industry," explains Maureen "which means we compete against movies, music, events and sport. People are increasingly looking wider. They read a book and want more from that author, so we need to set up great search facilities in-store."

This requirement for a more creative use of technology is matched by more pragmatic needs. "Like any retail organisation, we have a diverse range of sites and applications supported by a small team from a central location. We have 70 stores and offices around the country that need to keep in touch with each other and with the head office in Melbourne."

The hero of the story was total convergence

TelstraClear's solution for Whitcoulls needed to be simple, effective and scalable.

The answer was to bring everything together in a converged network based upon Cisco AVVID architecture, a VoIP system equally at home with voice and data. The network was designed and implemented by TelstraClear and its subsidiary Sytec, and is jointly managed by Whitcoulls and Hewlett Packard.

With internal voice calls now handled by the data network, costs have dropped significantly. Management and billing reporting use web-based tools to further increase efficiency. The power of the national infrastructure has helped defeat the tyranny of distance as well, allowing Whitcoulls to make the most of its greatest resource - people.

Some things are being done for the first time at Whitcoulls. Innovation within the IP Telephony network will allow video interviews and teleconferencing to bring the regional sales managers together in a virtual space. There's a big advantage for customers too. The new system will stream-line call flows, allowing Whitcoulls to manage their customers effectively and reduce the level of unanswered calls to the stores. Many of those calls are from customers wanting to know if a book is available, so a busy signal often means a lost sale.

A happy ending and a potentially exciting sequel

TelstraClear's pitch to Whitcoulls was about all of these things, but the potential of the future was stressed as well. The Wide Area Network (WAN) and IP Telephony will provide a range of choices for communicating with customers in the future and allow Whitcoulls to utilise audio, internet and video to communicate with customers in their stores.

"TelstraClear were already supporting us with our trans-Tasman data centre" says Maureen "but their tender really impressed us. They worked with us to find a whole solution and really helped us understand what could and couldn't be done in the future. They listened to us and worked with us. The formal tender evaluation put them ahead on every criterion."

For more information, call us on 0508 55 66 00 or visit www.telstraclear.co.nz

