

Technology Park Leverages Technology to Move Beyond LEED Gold

University of Victoria's Vancouver Island Technology Park turns to Cisco to transform decades-old hospital into modern innovation centre



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>VANCOUVER ISLAND TECHNOLOGY PARK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A University of Victoria Enterprise • Head Office: Victoria, BC • Clients: 35 <p>CHALLENGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build network infrastructure to support new technology and reduce environmental footprint • Provide advanced communications services to attract high tech companies • Link and monitor building systems and security using a scalable, innovative solution
<p>SOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cisco Catalyst® switches provide a fast, stable backbone for advanced services and collaboration technology • Cisco Unified Communications Manager offers clients unified communications capabilities • Cisco Network Building Mediator helps enable energy savings and efficiencies
<p>RESULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scalable unified communications services delivering additional revenue • Better monitoring of building systems to help manage energy consumption and costs • New services and environmental awareness attracting new, innovative companies to the Park

Challenge

Located in Victoria, B.C., Vancouver Island Technology Park (VITP) opened in late 2002 after its operators renovated and repositioned an old hospital to become an economic engine and an environmental leader. VITP was subsequently purchased by the University of Victoria in 2005. The park encompasses approximately 200,000 square feet and houses 35 corporate tenants. VITP's goal is to spur the growth of technology on Vancouver Island by providing physical infrastructure that connects provincial, national, and international resources with emerging or growing tech companies.

Early in the project's development, officials decided to create a Green Building to appeal to leading high tech companies and to showcase green technologies to the community. This step resulted in VITP becoming recognized as the first Canadian Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certified building by the U.S. Green Building Council in 2002. Since its inception, VITP has focused on installing advanced technology to attract tenants, boost VITP's revenue opportunities, and reduce the park's environmental footprint.

"From the beginning, we wanted to make our building's network a key component of our business and our clients' businesses," says Dale Gann, president of technology parks for the University of Victoria. "We don't think of the companies using our office space

as tenants; they're clients looking for leading-edge services that will assist them in gaining a competitive edge while enhancing their ability to attract talented employees. By creating a fast, stable network core, we knew we'd be able to offer advanced services like voice over IP and video."

Solution

VITP considered a number of technology providers before turning to Cisco. The Park felt that the Cisco brand recognition would resonate with tenants and the company's broad product portfolio would allow VITP to deploy services based on equipment from as few vendors as possible.

"Cisco has a reputation for great technology and support," Gann says. "We wanted to offer our clients services based around a name they knew and trusted, so Cisco was an obvious choice."

VITP's network core consists of Cisco Catalyst® switches, which feature intelligent, scalable performance, allowing customers to grow their network easily as their traffic increases. Cisco wireless access points and controllers keep clients connected to the network no matter where they roam on VITP's campus.

Cisco® Physical Security equipment helps VITP's security staff ensure the premises are secure. The security solutions include scalable web-based software and broadcast-quality hardware, which are integrated with VITP's older analogue-based security system and tied into the IP network backbone. The new Cisco cameras and software allow VITP's staff to spot and resolve potential security incidents quickly and effectively. Security staff are able to monitor multiple facilities from one console, thereby reducing the operational cost of onsite security.

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Cisco WebEx™, Cisco WebEx Connect, and Cisco TelePresence™ allow clients to hold meetings online, lowering the cost and environmental impact created by face-to-face meetings. Cisco WebEx and WebEx Connect combine real-time desktop sharing with phone conferencing, allowing participants in a WebEx conference to view and discuss a presentation as if they were in the same room.

Cisco TelePresence takes the long-distance meeting experience a step further by combining high-quality audio and lifelike high-definition video to allow customers with TelePresence suites to meet, share content, and create video recordings and events over a stable, secure network connection.

Cisco Unified Communications Server and IP phones allow clients to take advantage of voice over IP (VoIP) and unified communications services such as presence and collaboration. Presence allows key contacts and co-workers to see instantly if someone they want to communicate via phone or instant message is available, on the phone, away from the desk, or out of the office. By combining voice, presence, and video, companies can create better team interactions, dynamically bringing together individuals, virtual workgroups, and teams.

“We want to be recognized for more than just offering space. We want to deliver valuable services and a unique experience to our clients. With our commitment to environmental sustainability and our investments in network and communications technologies, we believe we’re achieving our goal.” – Dale Gann

“Our services benefit our clients by giving them access to advanced video, voice, and collaboration features they wouldn’t be able to get on a typical telephony system,” says Gann. “For example, a small business can buy phones from us as they grow, and since they’re IP phones, they’re very simple to add. You can just plug them into an outlet, connect them to the network, and they work right away, unlike a traditional telephone, which needs to be configured and can take days to install. By providing an innovative IP infrastructure, our companies are able to access business solutions that help to lower operating costs in an environmentally responsible way. The Cisco Unified Communications system also benefits us by serving as a source of additional revenue.”

Finally, VITP is using Cisco Network Building Mediator to support an application by Cisco partner, Pulse Energy. The Pulse Energy dashboard displays real-time energy consumption information within the park, which can be used to identify possible areas of improvement and help control the park’s environmental footprint. Mediator uses the network to transform the way buildings are operated. Through the network,

the Mediator has the ability to connect disparate building systems, allowing building operations to run more efficiently without having to rip and replace systems.

By partnering with Cisco, VITP has been able to set up a “living lab” near the entrance to its building, which allows the landlord to showcase all the leading innovative services that it offers to prospective and existing clients.

“It lets them experience right away how we’re different from other facilities or buildings,” Gann says. “And it gets them thinking about how services like VoIP or WebEx can help their businesses and make them more environmentally friendly.”

Results

VITP’s investment in green IT infrastructure and its dedication to environmental sustainability have attracted a variety of technically savvy and environmentally conscious clients.

“In the grand scheme, the network is a small investment that has easily paid for itself,” Gann says. “It has allowed us to run advanced services, stand out from the crowd and build a solid base of desirable clients. Perhaps what’s most amazing is the building itself is decades-old, but the Cisco technology has allowed us to transform it into a modern-day innovation centre.”

VITP is able to offer its advanced communications services to tenants by partnering with Cisco Premier Certified Partner, Boardwalk Communications.

“VITP is very open to new technology, and the tenants appreciate that,” says Philip Stone, president of Boardwalk Communications, which handles all of VITP’s technology initiatives.

“VITP represents the next-generation research and technology park, offering customizable services and tools beyond simple office space requirements. Tenants have access to the latest in IP security solutions, advanced communications capabilities, and energy-saving tools.”

One client attracted to VITP by the Park’s green strategy and advanced green IT infrastructure is GenoLogics Life Sciences Software Inc. GenoLogics makes collaborative software solutions for the life sciences industry that advance the early detection, prevention, and treatment of disease. The firm has offices, partners, and customers in several countries and relies extensively on a range of communications platforms to stay in touch with all of them.

“We have a lot of younger employees, and they tend to be socially conscious,” says GenoLogics’ CEO Michael Ball. “Our commitment to be as green as possible and our access to leading technologies give us an edge in attracting talent.”

Cisco WebEx in particular has helped GenoLogics keep the company’s travel down.

“WebEx has been a great tool for us,” Ball says. “We use it for customer presentations, information gathering, and internal training. It has significantly reduced our travel costs and requirements.”

GenoLogics also recently used the on premise Cisco TelePresence unit to interview a job candidate outside the province. TelePresence’s ability to create a lifelike meeting saved GenoLogics the cost of a plane ticket and hotel, making it easier to recruit top talent globally and stay in touch with distant employees.

“TelePresence offers such an excellent communications experience, we can make that hire anywhere and still have that person feel as if they’re a part of our team,” Ball says. “It’s a real competitive advantage for us.”

Next Steps

With the network core that the Park currently has in place, VITP plans to expand to 250,000 square feet in the future and add new tenants.

“The Cisco equipment is very scalable, so we’ll be able to add network traffic and clients without any problems,” he says. “We won’t have to rip out our existing gear and replace it with something more expensive.”

VITP plans to use its network and Cisco Mediator, in partnership with Pulse Energy, a provider of energy management software, to track energy usage in the park and make adjustments to reduce energy consumption, empowering the companies’ employees, and saving money for both the Park and its clients.

“The goal is to first monitor the systems to track our usage and then take a more proactive approach and have Mediator turn building systems like heating and lighting up and down as required,” Gann says. “We also want to get all of our clients using Pulse Energy’s dashboard, so they can see how best to control their own energy usage.”

The Park is also investigating how it can use its network to better coordinate its security team with individual tenant security systems. By tying clients’ alarm systems into the network, VITP security staff could be notified if a client’s alarm goes off. The on-site security staff could investigate the situation before outside security arrives and resolve the situation more quickly.

“We want to be recognized for more than just offering space,” Gann says. “We want to deliver valuable services and a unique experience to our clients. With our commitment to environmental sustainability and our investments in network and communications technologies, we believe we’re achieving our goal.”

The network has truly become part of the DNA of VITP’s physical environment, and is the platform over which we can deliver our existing and future services. We firmly believe the network has allowed us to set ourselves apart from the field and attract a valuable and technically savvy group of clients.”

PRODUCT LIST
<p>Switching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cisco Catalyst® 3560 Series Switches
<p>Unified Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cisco Unified Communications Manager • Cisco Unified IP Phones 7940, 7941 and 7975 • Cisco WebEx™ and Cisco WebEx Connect • Cisco TelePresence™
<p>Connected Real Estate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cisco Network Building Mediator
<p>Cisco® Physical Security Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cisco Video Surveillance Operation Manager • Cisco Video Surveillance Media Virtual Matrix • Cisco Video Surveillance Media Server • Cisco Video Surveillance 2550 Series IP Cameras

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