

Mitel Helps University Bridge Nation's Past to Present

CUSTOMER NEEDS

- An internet phone system seamlessly linking researchers in seven universities from coast to coast
- Free long-distance calling
- Easy flexible teleconferencing

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

- Mitel Teleworker Solution
- Mitel 3300 IP Communications Platform (ICP)
- Mitel IP Phones

RESULTS

- More efficient decision-making
- A more cohesive team
- Saving time and money with free real-time communication



It's an example of technology taking us back to the future and forward into the past. A cross-country team of historians and other experts in seven universities is using the latest online collaboration tools to analyze Canadian census records from 1911 to 1951 and create databases that will be used by social scientists for years to come. Yet a key to the success of the groundbreaking Canadian Century Research Infrastructure (CCRI) project is the researchers' ability to do what people have been doing for more than a hundred years – talk to one another on the phone.

Mitel® Teleworker Solution – a technology that combines the reliability of the plain old telephone with the advanced features of IP communication – provides CCRI team members with the ability to participate in conference calls, and phone from one end of the country to the other whenever they want at virtually no cost. As project coordinator Carmen Bauer puts it, "We don't have to worry about long distance calls and that is encouraging us to talk more to one another. In a project like ours that involves quite a lot of people all over the country, it makes a big difference."

One the largest social science research projects ever undertaken in Canada, the CCRI has the ambitious goal of creating databases that will help interpret census records in their historical context. This involves extensive analysis, not only of the census data itself, but also of background material, such as newspaper reports, records of parliamentary debates and other historical evidence that sheds light on why various questions were asked and how the answers were understood. In order to do this, the researchers in various campuses from coast to coast must work very closely together to resolve numerous complicated and subtle questions involving dense and voluminous material. It is therefore a project that requires the very best in communications technology and Mitel has helped meet this challenge.

The project is centrally administered at the University of Ottawa. A virtual private network (VPN) links coordinators, researchers and technicians in Ottawa with their colleagues at the University of Victoria, York University, the University of Toronto, the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Université Laval and Memorial University of Newfoundland. Email, a web portal and online tools provide a means of



it's about **YOU**

Customer Experience

➔ Canadian Century Research Infrastructure

ABOUT CANADIAN CENTURY RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

Type: Academic

Location: Ottawa hub, nationwide satellites

Number of Schools Participating: Seven

Project Participants: 23

"Without the Mitel teleworkers, conference calls would be limited because they would have to be arranged by project coordinators in Ottawa, thus involving administrative costs, in addition to phone company service charges. With the Mitel solution, anyone involved in the project can set up a conference call themselves at no additional expense. Again, it is not just a matter of saving time and money, but also providing more autonomy for participants. The solution allows a lot of flexibility in that it does not have to be always coordinated centrally and that fits very well with the structure of our project."

– Carmen Bauer,
project coordinator, CCRI

collaborating, exchanging documents and information, and also link the seven campuses with partner institutions such as Statistics Canada, the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency, the Library and Archives of Canada and IBM Canada.

"But email and online collaboration are not enough," said Sandra Clark, assistant project co-ordinator. "The issues are often too complicated to discuss and resolve online, especially with so many people involved. Relying too much on email can lead to confusion, misunderstanding and, ultimately, wastes a lot of time. It is often easier, quicker and more efficient to pick up the phone and discuss an issue in person or call a group of people together to make decisions in a conference call," said Clark.

It is for this reason that much of the project's decision-making and collaboration is accomplished by means of Mitel's Teleworker Solution. Twenty-three project participants at the seven universities across Canada have full-featured Mitel IP phones on their desks connected to their university data network. Each phone is connected via the Internet to the University of Ottawa's phone system and has a University of Ottawa extension number. This means, for example, that Doug Thompson at the University of Victoria, simply has to dial an extension number to reach a colleague in St. John's, Newfoundland. He can also dial "9" to get an outside line through the University of Ottawa exchange and make a local call to Statistics Canada or anywhere else in the Ottawa calling area. By the same token, anyone in Ottawa can contact Thompson in Victoria by making a local call to the University of Ottawa and dialing his extension.

"While this saves money for a project on a tight budget and encourages regular communication among participants, it also contributes to the cohesiveness of the team," said Clark. "We all have extension numbers and we almost feel like we're on the same campus."

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Ironically, the value of old fashioned voice communication, albeit enhanced with the latest Internet technology, comes to the fore when project participants need to talk to one another to resolve technical issues and manage the network. Clark cites the example of collaborating with a colleague at Université Laval in preparing a software manual that was too big even to send by email. They were able to go over the manual and discuss it page by page on the phone, she said. "It was almost like we were in the same office."

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