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NEW POLYTECHNIC BREAKS LOOSE FROM CONVENTIONAL DESK-BOUND WORKPLACE
BY 'CUTTING THE WIRES THAT BIND'

Staff can now work from anywhere on campus with laptop usage and 100% wireless Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system

30 Aug 2004 - SINGAPORE - Republic Polytechnic has scored another first by being the only academic institution in Singapore to switch to 100% wireless VoIP phone infrastructure, enabling its staff to be completely free to work from anywhere on campus. Where other VoIP users are still 'desk-bound' because of the continued use of the desk-phone with the technology, RP's unique combination of wireless technology and the VoIP system allows complete mobility.

Every member of RP's staff is equipped with an IP softphone that is installed onto their laptops or tablet, hence replacing the traditional phone set and fixed line. Untethered, sans cables and wires, RP staff no longer have to work within the restrictive confines of the traditional, wired desk-bound environment. No longer constrained to their cubicle, they can now make phone calls, check voicemail messages, surf the Internet, check traffic news, check flight departures and arrivals, get the weather report, book a taxi, search for information on students, or even SMS them - from the canteen, the library or the restroom! By going wireless - removing the wires that restrict employees to their desk - RP now has a truly mobile work environment.

Established just two years ago, Republic Polytechnic is already one of the most IT-savvy institutions in Singapore. Its technology-driven campus and e-processes have accounted greatly for the recent list of certifications obtained recently: ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001, People Developer Standard, and the Singapore Family Friendly Employer Award.

"Being a very technology-driven organization, we want to harness the benefits of technological opportunity to the very limits. Implementing our campus-wide wireless network enables not just a 24x7 working environment, more importantly, it enables us to deliver even better levels of service to both our internal and external customers," commented Prof Low Teck Seng, Principal & CEO, Republic Polytechnic.

For RP, the benefits of having a fully wireless campus are many. One of the most tangible advantages is in terms of the dollars and cents of the whole infrastructure. According to Prof Low, "With VOIP as our main backbone of communications, we now have a seamless interface between email, SMS and IP telephony to communicate efficiently in real time."

In terms of real cost, implementing IP telephony in place of the traditional PABX telephony system translates directly into over $27,000 of savings in operating costs for the first year and $55,000 in the second year. To put it simply, the days of the ageing PABX telephony system are numbered. The world is now in the era of converging voice, video, data and the World Wide Web all into one network and Republic Polytechnic is staying ahead of the technology curve by putting in place a fully e-enabled campus which operates on the basis of pervasive usage of emerging technologies.

"Singapore's Institutes of Higher Learning are on the leading-edge of technology adoption in the Asia Pacific but Republic Polytechnic has implemented something truly unique. This is the one of first large scale deployments of IP Telephony over a Wireless LAN infrastructure in the region. Cisco Systems together with
our partners, Radiance Communications and NexLabs, are honoured to be part of this milestone. Republic Polytechnic is demonstrating how the convergence of several technologies can lead to powerful cost-savings and performance enhancements," said Craig Gledhill, managing director, Singapore, Cisco Systems.

Elaborating on this vision, Prof Low said, "Our vision is to have a truly mobile working ethos that is not confined to the four corners of the office. Telecommuting will become a way of life with this existing infrastructure and we have already started to explore telecommuting amongst the staff on campus, hence allowing for a more flexible working arrangement."

Staff of RP have widely embraced the wide range of messaging and communications options available to them with the VoIP. Said Dr Loke Han Ying, a Facilitator with the School of Engineering, "Many of my students are able to contact me whenever and wherever they need assistance in their school work. I am online most of the time and am able to counsel and advise them either online or face-to-face when the need arises."

Republic Polytechnic will continue to aggressively pursue providing a 100% mobile computing environment for all staff and students at its Woodlands Campus in 2006.

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