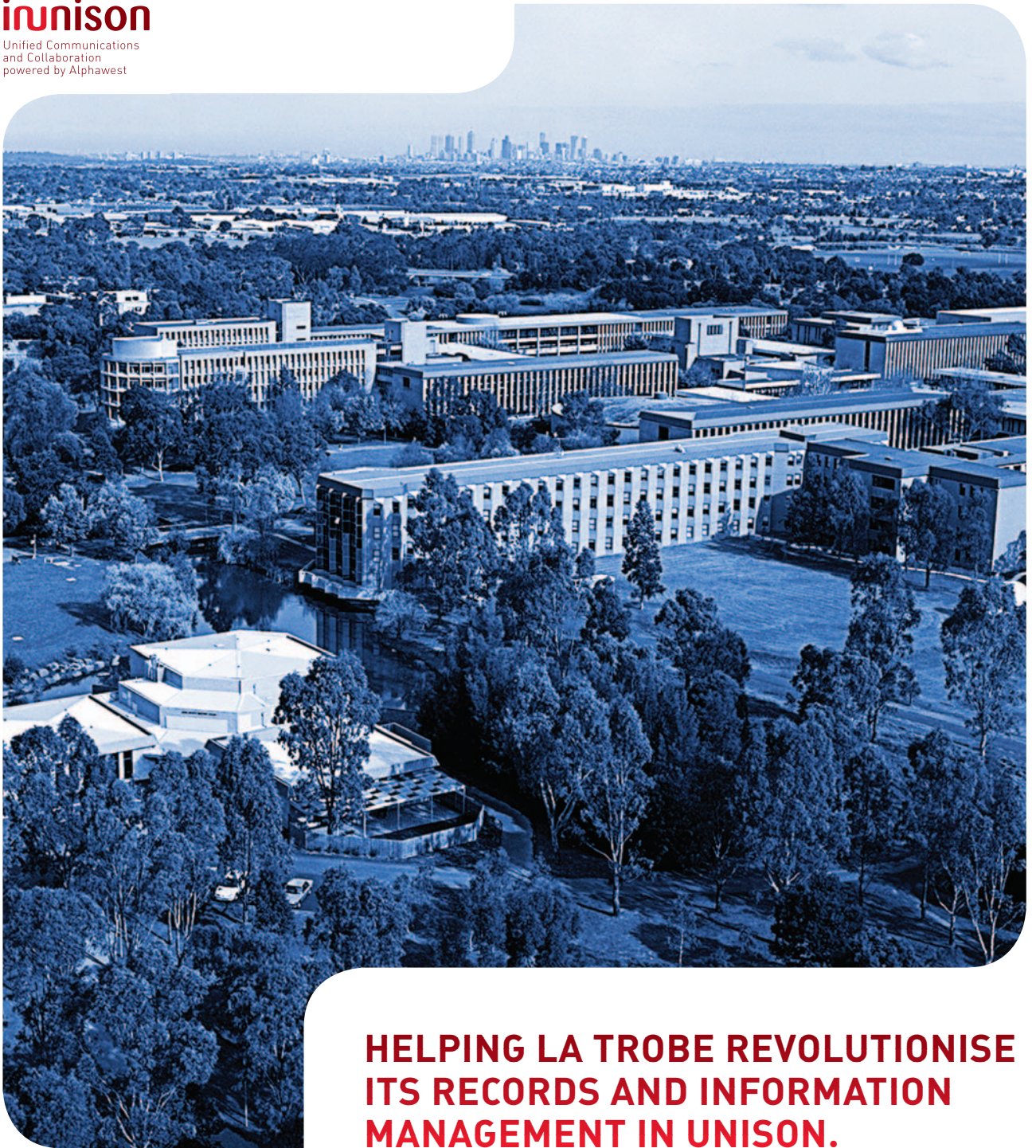


inunison

Unified Communications
and Collaboration
powered by Alphawest

CASE STUDY



HELPING LA TROBE REVOLUTIONISE ITS RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IN UNISON.



By replacing its paper-based records management system and streamlining its information recording and retrieval processes, La Trobe University improved staff productivity and enhanced the educational experiences of its students.

The Client

La Trobe University opened in 1967 with just 552 students. Today, La Trobe accommodates over 26,000 local and international students and employs approximately 2,700 staff. This steady growth has resulted in the expansion of La Trobe, now having seven urban and regional campuses, most offering a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

La Trobe's main campus at Bundoora in Victoria houses the Records Services Unit, which plays a critical role in the central registry of University information.

The Business Challenge

In 2002 La Trobe decided it was necessary to upgrade its records management system when amendments to the Higher Education Funding Act 1998 (Cth) were introduced. The new laws affected the way the university needed to report and keep track of information pertaining to grants for Higher Education Assistance, Operating and other grants, and the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) among others. The upgrade also encompassed requirements to support the University's strategic aim in developing a true Corporate Information Program.

“It was Alphawest's previous experience of delivering electronic records management solutions that we believed would ensure a successful outcome...”

La Trobe started the process by investigating what solutions were available to replace its existing paper-based records format. The new solution was required to not only comply with the new laws, but also to improve La Trobe's efficiency in handling increasingly large amounts of registry information.

Ross Elford, Manager, Records Services for La Trobe, identified two challenges involved with the project: “Primarily we had to ensure that none of the data was lost during the transfer process, which wouldn't be easy considering that most of it was on paper and was filed in many different formats and areas. Secondly, whichever solution we chose to implement had to be very user friendly to encourage a high adoption rate with staff.”

Alphawest was selected to work on the project, after an exhaustive tendering process and a focus group of 30 La Trobe staff who conducted an in depth needs analysis. Elford explained that it was Alphawest's technical expertise and renowned experience in the education sector that got them over the line, “It was Alphawest's previous experience of delivering electronic records management solutions that we believed would ensure a successful outcome.

There obviously isn't much they haven't dealt with in helping businesses manage information and the team provided invaluable support and guidance throughout the evaluation process and the pilot program. It's for these reasons also that we've sought Alphawest's assistance with a number of ensuing projects.”

The Alphawest Solution

Alphawest's first project was to install the TRIM Context records management solution at the Bundoora campus. TRIM Context was installed across three business units within the University – a Faculty Office (the Faculty of Law and Management), Records Services Unit and Legal Services Unit.

Alphawest designed the system based on the business analysis undertaken by the La Trobe project team. Alphawest also provided technical advice regarding the required IT infrastructure, training and user acceptance testing, and then worked with the Records Management team at La Trobe to migrate the data from the previous system.

Following the successful completion of the pilot project and further TRIM deployments throughout the University, Alphawest was called on once again, this time to customise and implement a web application that enabled online access to digitised student information. This was to complement the deployment of TRIM to the University's Student Records Office. Previously, La Trobe's student records were managed in hard-copy format and often the records were stored offsite or at other campuses, which meant that managing records was an extremely time and space-consuming process. With Alphawest's web access tool, approved University staff now have immediate access to student records.

Alphawest also assisted in installing a TRIM Context upgrade that would facilitate the continued expansion of La Trobe's Corporate Information Program.

The Benefits

La Trobe, in conjunction with Alphawest, deployed and integrated the TRIM Context solution with the University's desktop applications to capture a variety of information, including emails. This has enabled the University to maintain good record management practices in a manner that can support business processes and assist staff in performing their daily tasks.

Alphawest's student records solution facilitates real-time access to student records where previously it could have taken up to a week for faculty staff to be provided with the same information. As a consequence, as more faculty users become confident in the integrity and immediacy of the solution, there is less of a need for faculties to manage their own duplicated student filing systems. The space savings that have ensued have been considerable.

"TRIM and Alphawest have facilitated a real revolution in terms of how the University processes, manages and accesses student records. Where once the Student Records Office was tied to some fairly burdensome, albeit necessary, practices in the hard-copy world, Alphawest's solution has now helped the University embrace the more streamlined approach that the electronic world offers," said Elford.

The initial and ensuing deployments of TRIM Context have greatly assisted La Trobe in promoting good records management practices to the end user, with staff becoming more confident using TRIM Context to thoroughly capture and manage data on their desktops in a more secure and compliant way. Elford explained, "Even in the early days of post implementation, we noticed the benefits derived from supporting digital records. We saw improvements when it came to finding and retrieving information and although managing records was something that end users have always been doing, they are just more conscious of it now, and as such are more likely to do it in a more efficient, more secure, compliant and consistent manner that maintains the integrity of the data."

Elford also highlighted that the introduction of TRIM helped decrease employee workloads, resulting in an increase in business productivity: "Business units, particularly those that deal with large volumes of information, have embraced TRIM and are now spending much less time searching for information than they used to."

"With the help of Alphawest, hard-copy storage needs are much less of an issue, users are up-to-date in their filing, which leaves time for other tasks

and in the case of the Student Records Office alone, it's expected that this will result in financial savings within the vicinity of \$80,000 per annum," he said.

Elford concluded, "Ultimately, the products do what we were told they would do. However, I think that Alphawest should get more credit for achieving this seemingly simple outcome. With the real-time access to information, in a more streamlined and organised fashion, our staff are ultimately able to build stronger relationships with the students and enhance their overall education experience."

The Future

Due to the success of the three projects, La Trobe has committed itself to further deployments of TRIM Context throughout its network of regional campuses. They have commenced installing TRIM in the Student Services Centres of their regional campuses to complement the program at the main Bundoora campus. "This project will ensure that the Student Services areas of all campuses are able to share and collaborate on information in a much more efficient and secure manner, which enables the University to maintain good records management practices, which is critical to the success of our Corporate Information Program." Elford said.

inunison

Unified Communications
and Collaboration
powered by Alphawest

YOUR TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS PARTNER IN ONE.

To find out how your business
can work better in unison,
please contact Alphawest today.

1300 788 410
www.alphawest.com.au

Alphawest, in conjunction with our parent company, Optus, provides integrated Information and Communication Technology (ICT) solutions to private businesses, public companies and government organisations across Australia.

Since 1986, Alphawest has been bringing technology, processes and people together, to help organisations simply work and communicate better. Being part of the SingTel Group enables us to provide solutions that work in unison with Optus' communications networks, so that you can work more productively in more places.

Our solutions are built around a Unified Communications and Collaboration strategy, encompassing expertise in Business Communications, Security, Information and Process Management, Data Centre Technologies, Mobility and Wireless, Managed Services and Green Technology.

As a single source provider, we can help you identify, plan, deploy, secure, manage and optimise your technology and communications investments, to help enhance your productivity, drive competitive advantage and profitability, improve customer service and reduce your environmental impact.



BUSINESS

A wholly-owned subsidiary of Optus Networks Pty Ltd
and part of the SingTel Group.
Alphawest Services Pty Ltd ABN 49 009 196 347
ALPH_12067

www.mindfield.net.au