

## Citel helps well known Belgian educational institute migrate to VoIP

**SIP enabling existing handsets saves time and money and eases shift to VoIP for educational institute**

The Saint Ursula Institute ([www.sui.be](http://www.sui.be)) located in Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Waver, Belgium, is a mixed gender Catholic school with around 1700 students aged from twelve to eighteen years of age, as well as 700 adults attending their adult education classes. The Saint Ursula Institute (SUI) is well known for its high standard of education and progressive teaching, as well its international reach; with students coming to the school from countries as diverse as Turkey, Lithuania and Poland.



### Moving to Asterisk IP PBX

The IT department had reviewed their telephony infrastructure and decided to move from traditional PBXs to an Asterisk based IP telephony platform. They were finding that their old PBXs were costly to rent, as well a nuisance when it came to extending the system with new phones. Each time a new phone was added the school had to contact their supplier to extend or modify the system. By choosing an open source Asterisk IP PBX platform, the Institute could build a flexible system and manage any modification themselves, further enhancing cost savings.

Many organizations within Europe have looked at Asterisk based IP telephony platforms, but those organizations have been faced with the costly problem of having to purchase new VoIP enabled phones. For SUI to whom Belgium's major telecom operator Belgacom had earlier supplied with Alcatel handsets, and the proposed move to VoIP technology would make these handsets redundant.

### Able to keep familiar Alcatel handsets

At SUI, the cost of replacing fifty analog and fifty digital Alcatel phones with new IP phones, new cabling and Power over Ethernet (PoE) switches was proving to be a short term costly decision. The school started to look around for an alternative and following some intensive research learnt about Citel Technologies and its VoIP migration device, the Portico™ TVA™. By using this device, instead of disposing of these phones, SUI would be able to keep their existing cabling, avoid the cost of new Power over Ethernet switches, and keep their mix of tried and tested analog and Alcatel phones, thus reducing the cost and disruption involved in the introduction of new IP phones.

**“Migrating to VoIP with the Portico TVA is almost as easy as click and play!”**

## The Steps to Easy Migration

The biggest challenge SUI faced was running the old PBX in parallel with the new Asterisk PBX to ensure that the new system worked smoothly before switching over entirely to VoIP. The school decided to migrate to VoIP in three steps; firstly replacing thirty phones with VoIP enabled phones, then migrating thirty Alcatel phones using the Portico TVA system, and finally keeping around forty analog phones in place using an analog to VoIP adapter.

At the time SUI contacted Citel, Alcatel phones were not fully supported by the Portico TVA solution however the Citel development team in the UK set to work, working closely with the ICT support team at the school to ensure users got the look, feel and experience they expected.



Sander Naudts, ICT-Coordinator at SUI firstly had doubts; “At the start I was a little sceptic because you read about a lot of echo problems on analog gateways, but the Citel Portico TVA didn’t have an issue with that, migrating to VoIP with the Portico TVA is almost as easy as click and play!”

The Citel Portico TVA solution minimises the disruption and costs in migrating to VoIP and as

seen at SUI, staff have been able to keep their Alcatel and analog phones, without the end user experience changing. The school staff continues to have access to the same features previously in place such as call forwarding, call pickup and speed dial buttons, in which they were already well trained.

## Future Expansion

The IT department at SUI were able to meet the new needs of the school, without the type of disruption often seen elsewhere when new technology is introduced. For SUI the plan is to increase the number of VoIP phones to a number of buildings on the site, and with the Portico TVA powered VoIP system now fully in place, they have the flexibility to achieve this with minimum disruption and cost.

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