



## Marconi University cuts cost of delivering e-Learning from the cloud by 23% using Interoute Virtual Data Centre



Università degli Studi  
Guglielmo Marconi

**Italy's first Open University moves to the cloud with Interoute Virtual Data Centre, cutting costs, freeing up resources and building an international platform for award-winning education.**

Marconi University is a vibrant Open University which offers graduate and postgraduate courses to more than 14,000 students annually. Named after Guglielmo Marconi, winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics for his contribution to radio communications, this world-class University became Italy's first Open University in 2004.

The University integrates traditional classroom teaching methods with virtual learning methods. It runs an online Virtual Campus e-Learning platform and distributes educational content for mobile devices and the Marconi WebTV Channel.

Marco de Nicola, IT Area Systems Manager at Marconi University, explains: "Most of the services we provide our students with on campus are also available via the Internet. Students enrolled in our courses use their computers, tablets and smartphones to follow lessons, prepare for exams, take pre-exam practice tests and interact with tutors."

### The challenge

The University previously had its IT infrastructure in a colocation facility in Rome, with the servers and storage managed by a third party. However, as the storage hardware in the facility neared its end of life, the increasing maintenance required kept the University

IT department from focusing on strategic areas of innovation and began to impact the availability of services to end users.

"We wanted to completely release our IT department from the burdens of managing hardware systems," explains de Nicola. "So, in search of more time for our strategic priorities, better quality of service and higher performance, we decided to look at a cloud computing model."

The new cloud infrastructure had to be always on; reliable and available 24-hours a day with excellent connectivity to Marconi University's global user base.

"Our students from around the world need to be able to access our services and educational materials any time, day or night," highlights de Nicola.

"In technology terms, this means we need a high-performance infrastructure that has very high levels of availability and network resilience."

### The solution

Marconi University chose to move to the Interoute Virtual Data Centre (VDC). Combined with a Virtual Private Network, also from Interoute, the University's headquarters in Rome and their regional offices are now connected to their own private cloud. The platform is hosted in the Interoute VDC facility in London. Linked by a secure VPN connection, the University uses the Interoute VDC facility in Amsterdam for backup of training materials, including data rich media such as video recordings.



de Nicola comments, "With Interoute VDC we get computing resources, storage, secure connectivity and managed services, in one completely virtualised, flexible and SLA-backed package. We use Interoute VDC to deliver all our services for internal and external users, as it forms the foundation for our entire learning management system."

To ensure IT usage matches the allocated departmental budget, financial predictability is also a key feature of the solution.

"A major benefit of using Interoute VDC is the financial flexibility it allows. We pay for a predetermined range of services, but we can adapt this at any time. The price for 'bursting' beyond our committed resources is fixed in advance, so there are no surprises later on," says de Nicola. "Interoute VDC comes with a simple control panel interface, which gives us constant visibility of our consumption. We have immediate control of every aspect of our infrastructure, including server administration, the physical location of our data and network management."

## The results

The Interoute VDC solution has greatly reduced the cost of infrastructure for Marconi University.

De Nicola explains: "The Interoute VDC solution is 23% cheaper a year to run than our previous solution, which means we can now focus much more time and financial resources on driving strategic projects for the University."

"We quickly saw improved system performance which greatly enhanced the services provided to our users," says de Nicola. "Our IT Department has achieved a fantastic level of freedom in a very short time, as we no longer have to spend time maintaining or managing the systems."

"In spite of the scale of complexity of the project, the entire technical and organisational process ran smoothly," de Nicola notes. "Using the Interoute Virtual Data Centre has confirmed our belief in cloud computing as the ideal delivery method for our e-Learning infrastructure."

## Looking ahead

Marconi University initially chose to have a fixed monthly cost plan to pay for the cloud services from Interoute. As the University becomes more familiar with its fluctuating usage patterns throughout the academic year, the opportunity is there to match spending more closely with usage through pay-as-you-go spending.

"We are now working on making our e-Learning platform auto scaling so it will increase the deployment of web servers and application servers in line with demand," said de Nicola. "Matching this with a pay-as-you-go payment plan from Interoute will mean only paying for exactly what we use."

Using Interoute VDC as its infrastructure platform, the University is also able to scale its learning management system across Interoute's pan-European network.

"Interoute VDC is a great platform for delivering education from the cloud because it helps us extend our international reach on a reliable, scalable and highly-available platform," concludes de Nicola.

## About Marconi University

Marconi University is a recognised leader in online education, offering its students traditional and blended learning settings. The University currently has more than 14,000 students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs, 300 faculty members and an academic advisory team of more than 200 experts.

[www.marconiuniversity.org](http://www.marconiuniversity.org)

## About Interoute

Interoute Communications Ltd is the owner operator of Europe's largest cloud services platform, which encompasses over 60,000 km of lit fibre, 10 hosting data centres and 31 collocation centres, with connections to 140 additional third party data centres across Europe. Its Unified ICT strategy has proved attractive to enterprises looking for a scalable, secure and unconstrained platform on which they can build their voice, video, computing and data services, as well as service providers in need of high capacity international data transit and infrastructure.

[www.interoute.com/vdc](http://www.interoute.com/vdc)

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