

# Hornbill Supportworks is Top of the Class for Drew University



Drew University, located in northern New Jersey, has an enrolment of approximately 1,900 students, the majority of whom live on campus. The university has a reputation for excellence and innovation and is committed to the use of technology in support of both teaching and learning. As early as 1984 the University began its Computer Initiative, aimed at promoting "ubiquitous computing".

Over the years, the growth of a campus-wide computing network has significantly increased demands on Drew's IT support services. From initially simply tracking student computers taken in for repair, the support required has grown to fully supporting hardware, software, classrooms and LAN and wireless networks. To manage its inventory and support its 2,200 technology users including staff and students across campus using some 3,000 computers, the University has selected Hornbill's Supportworks helpdesk management solution.

## Identifying the Need for a Management System

The University originally had in place a "home-grown" Oracle Helpdesk application written in Perl. This system was used only by the main student helpdesk for tracking computer repair issues for machines that were physically dropped off at the helpdesk. The support desk wanted to be able to track and log calls, which the Oracle system was unable to do. In addition, following a re-organisation, the technology department had become more centralised and Drew wished to introduce a helpdesk solution that would integrate information across telecommunications, computing and networking services. Drew also wished to simplify procedures for its customers with a single log-on identity to all network systems, including helpdesk support.

The University also ran an asset tracking system, based on Microsoft SQL Server, to track inventory information on models, enabling them to track repeated hardware problems and whether hardware was student-owned, a loan machine or a departmental purchase. The new helpdesk system needed to be able to interface with the existing asset tracking system.

## The selection criteria

A selection committee headed by Axel Larsson, Enterprise Integration Specialist at Drew, and comprising of technology department members, considered solutions from a number of vendors including FrontRange's Heat and Blue Ocean's TrackIt. Hornbill's Supportworks was selected for its ease of use and functionality - including its ability to integrate with third party applications used by

## Business Benefits:

- Improved customer service through effective logging and tracking of enquires
- Self-service aspect of the system enables customers to sign onto helpdesk website, check call status and search for information in knowledgebase reducing helpdesk calls
- Call classification and reporting helps to manage trends and allows the organisation to plan help desk resources more effectively
- Integration of Supportworks with third party applications enables more accurate, synchronised asset and user data, enabling faster customer response
- Easy to use, intuitive system speeds installation and configuration, and ultimately improves return on investment.

the university. Supportworks is so user-friendly and intuitive that Axel and his team were able to download, install and configure the system themselves.

Axel Larsson explains, "Enhanced inventory control was important, but we also wanted the ability to communicate with other technology departments to support our vision of an integrated computing environment. Consolidating logging and tracking calls across the departments was the first step in providing an improved customer service. Being able to set up this configuration for ourselves was a huge plus point."

#### Integrating Asset and Customer Data

Supportworks' ability to integrate with third party applications was a key factor in its selection. As part of the implementation, a link was developed between Drew's existing Microsoft SQL server-based asset tracking application to synchronise its data with the full call logging capability provided by Supportworks. Drew is also able to pre-populate and update the Supportworks customer database with fields such as phone extensions, addresses and department from its internal administration database.

Using Novell Identity Manager, ID allocation is integrated with Supportworks, while Novell iChain allows customers to use the same log-on for the Helpdesk support services as for other technology services provided by the University.

Service Level Agreement (SLA) criteria can now be assigned to customers, departmental cost centres, sites and types of problem, with each technology department responsible for its own SLAs.

#### Improving Customer Service

The self-service aspect of the system, enabling customers to sign onto the website, log calls and check the status of calls is vital for Drew to improve service levels. Users can also search for information in the Supportworks knowledgebase, customised along the lines of the University's existing technology website.

Using Supportworks' call classification module, Drew has been able to classify calls and identify how helpdesk resource is being used - whether for technical issues, configuring or deploying new services or training. This information helps the IT support team to ensure that helpdesk resource is managed effectively when new systems are introduced or when routine maintenance is required, with no degradation in service.

#### Smooth Transition

Deployment of the new Hornbill solution was completed in August 2003. To ease the transition from each department's existing procedures for logging calls, Supportworks' form designer was used extensively.

"Hornbill's graphical designer enabled us to replicate the look of our existing paper-based and electronic forms for logging calls. The Microsoft Office 'look and feel' gives it a familiarity, making it easy to train users," commented Larsson.

#### Customisable to Drew's Needs

Drew is currently in the process of enabling real time updates to the Supportworks database using Novell DirXML and in the future, may enhance the system further to introduce call scripts for first level support.

Axel Larsson concludes, "Compared with other solutions, Hornbill's Supportworks unquestionably provides the flexibility and ease of use we were looking for. We have been easily able to customise the package to meet our diverse requirements and most importantly, we have been able to link the software with our existing databases and technology in line with our vision of an integrated computing environment."



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Axel Larsson  
Enterprise Integration Specialist  
Drew University

## HORNBILL

Hornbill Systems Ltd.  
Ares  
Odyssey Business Park  
West End Road  
Ruislip  
HA4 6QD  
UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 8582 8282  
Fax: +44 (0)20 8582 8288

Hornbill Systems, Inc.  
245 Park Avenue  
39th Floor  
New York  
NY 10167  
USA

Tel: +1 212 803 8100  
Fax: +1 212 792 4001

Email: [info@hornbill.com](mailto:info@hornbill.com)  
Web: [www.hornbill.com](http://www.hornbill.com)



Assetworks

Supportworks