

SECURING OUR FUTURE SECURITY



Staff rely on the University's security systems to work without fault.

We expect building doors to always unlock and lock at the right times and access cards to work seamlessly. Those of us who have complex components of the security system in our buildings want to know that Security will arrive if we activate our silent panic alarms, and that intruder alarms will detect unlawful movements.

Recently, one of the University's legacy access servers, called Forcefield, malfunctioned. This meant Security became blind and couldn't see if anyone required help.

"The first thing we knew about it was when we saw a critical alarm on the Forcefield system on our computers," says Security Services Coordinator Sophia Risino, who sprang into action.

Forcefield's failure had the potential to be a huge deal. But fortunately Property Services had already identified that the old system was overloaded and needed to be replaced. It had begun investing heavily in migrating Forcefield to Gallagher, a state of the art security system designed and manufactured by the Hamilton-based company. When Forcefield went down, 15 buildings on the City Campus had already been switched over to Gallagher, easing the pressure on the older system.

"If this hadn't happened the available options would have been significantly different and would have severely interrupted business," explains Sophia.

Instead, after a rigorous discussion among the Campus Operations Team and Chubb Security, it was decided that the buildings

operating on the failed server should be reconfigured onto the remaining operational Forcefield server. "Within two and a half hours full communication with all buildings was restored," says Phil Kirkham, Campus Operations Manager, Property Services.

Adds Emmett Mackle, Associate Director Facilities, Property Services: "If we hadn't solved the problem it would have been huge for staff and students and would have reflected badly on the University's reputation. As it was the resulting impact on the University was minimal and we kept both systems operating."

The University has one of the biggest

security systems in the Southern Hemisphere. Maintaining and managing this to meet the institution's growth is a tightly orchestrated process which began in 1992 when our first computerised security system called Ares was set up.

By 2004 we had moved to the more advanced Forcefield system. But then by October 2011 the number of buildings and doors was quickly approaching Forcefield's maximum capacity; its architecture was outdated and it wasn't scalable. After a rigorous selection process led by Property Services, a recommendation to implement Gallagher was endorsed by the University's executive.

"The new system operates on a virtual server and can keep expanding its capacity as our campuses grow," explains Sophia.

Gallagher also has the potential to integrate with other systems and provide more efficient provisioning of access through better management tools. That coupled with a dedicated team, ensures the University interests are kept safe and when the unexpected occurs the Security Team have the technical prowess to problem solve without major interruption.

"To keep abreast of our changing environment and ensure our facilities and people are safe hundreds of guards would be required if we didn't have the technical security systems of today," says Phil.



Members of the security team from left: Yaseen Sheik, Federico Weber, Phil Kirkham, Emmett Mackle, Sophia Risino, Fiona Murray