

# Make Your Network Roar

Delivering the infrastructure  
needed to support digitisation in  
higher education

**BLOCK** 



# Into the Lion's Den

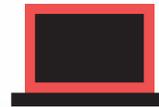
Investing in a robust and reliable infrastructure is the foundation for digital transformation and higher potential for higher education. But delivering such infrastructure can be difficult and the IT teams on the ground face significant challenges:



**Risk** - A lack of investment in IT infrastructure and supporting services has introduced substantial risk to the operating environment, and in many cases is leading to missed opportunities for digital transformation.



**Dependency** - Reliance on digital has given rise to the need for 'always-on' infrastructure – an outage now can potentially stop entire departments, or even hospitals, from doing their mission-critical work.



**Change** - The shift towards online and blended learning, especially in response to events like the COVID-19 pandemic, necessitates continuous adaptation of IT infrastructure to support evolving pedagogical models.



**Complexity** - ICT systems are complex, with more interdependency than ever before. The exponential growth of technologies, applications and devices has led to more interaction points making it difficult to stay in control.

Teams often struggle to balance this complexity with traditional management methods. A lack of time and investment in both technology, and development often prevents them adopting modern approaches to infrastructure. It's not a fair fight.

When infrastructure isn't stable much of the IT team's week will be spent firefighting, network outages can be common, your service desk will be spending a lot of time dealing with recurring incidents, and your staff and students will likely experience connectivity problems, slow login times and other issues which negatively impact their experience.

**The Future Ready Network enables organisations to deliver secure and reliable services which help tame complexity, empower staff and promote a more effective learning environment.**

# The Pride of Connectivity

## Agility

*Just as a lion needs to be adaptable to survive in the wilderness, so to do your network operations.*

You need to be able to keep pace with evolving technology and new innovations, scale resources as needed, support remote learning and deliver seamless student experiences.

Imagine a world where your network can grow and integrate organically without re-design, so infrastructure can be scaled up quickly and easily. Orchestration and Infrastructure as Code (IaC) allow you to accelerate release and deployment cycles, allowing enterprise-wide policy changes to happen in minutes, and with reduced variation and change failure.

## Mobility

*Just as a lion needs to roam, so to do your staff.*

Imagine if your people, students, and devices could move freely, and securely across any site, and even campus boundaries, with permissions dynamically applied as if at their 'home' location.

Picture your Wi-Fi not only as a major enabler in providing uptime and availability to critical service, but also delivering continuous uptime during network upgrades and component failure. All whilst providing consistent experiences for your people and your students.





## Security

Just as a lion needs to be constantly vigilant, so to do your network and security teams.

Imagine being able to protect essential data with granular control of network traffic across devices, user groups or servers. Even IoT devices and operational tech could be monitored and managed on the network. This extra layer of cyber resilience would not only reduce your attack surface, but it would also make it harder for any attack that did happen to propagate through the environment.

A Future Ready Network acts as the sole platform that binds, protects, and enables an increasingly dynamic set of people, applications and devices.

## Visibility

Just as a lion needs excellent eyesight, so to do your IT teams and managers.

What if your analytics and network telemetry were aggregated centrally, not only allowing you to see which of your systems were up or down, but also giving a rich contextual view of performance and usage. You could drive service improvement by troubleshooting issues faster, reducing incident resolution times by as much as 70%.

With true visibility into your network operations, you can put engineers in the driver's seat, equip managers with the keys to proactive governance, and offer executives a lens to see the true value of their investments

# Hunting for Excellence

Digital transformation can only succeed when built on architectures that are highly reliable, adaptable and secure. A smarter foundation can help to tame complexity, empower staff and promote better student experiences.

To be fully prepared for the future, technology and a modern architecture are only part of the picture. It's essential to adopt a new approach that focuses on mindset and innovation to meet current expectations and anticipate future needs. A Future Ready mindset prioritises improving services and user experiences by leveraging investments in existing technical architectures. This approach is vital to keeping pace with the demands of students, staff, researchers, and partners.

Network innovation has changed to a more software-centric approach. This brings a constant release-cycle of smart features and capabilities that continue to enhance and optimise network operations. Therefore, an agile approach is also crucial to transform network management. IaC, DevOps, AI, automation, and full-stack visibility are the key tools in the kit bag here, helping teams meet user demands, whilst focusing on innovation and transformation. These tools are essential for meeting service standards and freeing up time to focus on transformation.

The modern network is more than just a way of transmitting data. The latest technology allows you to take advantage of smart building and digital campus innovations to assist with:

- ▶ Creating more flexible learning environments
- ▶ Increasing student satisfaction through student engagement techniques
- ▶ Implementing modern and digital work processes
- ▶ Reducing energy consumption and electricity costs

However, without a reliable, agile, and secure network infrastructure, it will be extremely challenging to take advantage of these innovations.



# Develop a Pack Mentality

Upgrading your network infrastructure is no easy feat – it can be costly, time-consuming and involve significant risk if not done properly. Holding on to the past, however, can be costly too. Stepping out of your comfort zone is crucial if you want your IT department, and your organisation as a whole, to take advantage of digital transformation. What's the point of best-in-class applications if the underlying infrastructure impedes their performance?

We know that the network infrastructure is just one part of the IT environment that you and your team are looking after. It's not unusual for us to see IT teams in the clients that we work with have anywhere between 100 and 200 digital projects ongoing at any one time, sometimes more. To deliver at pace and scale consider getting support.

You may only be involved in network upgrades once or twice in your career. We do it every day, so let us help. We're driven by a belief in better, we're determined to deliver faster time to value, and we're dedicated to making smarter technology work for you – as it can, as it should, and as you and your stakeholders deserve. When we apply the Block Approach to your operation, we know that lasting transformation is not only possible but well within reach.





block.co.uk