

Education IT

Malaysian University expands campus network

By [Kelly Ng](#) | 6 October 2010

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Universiti Malaysia Perlis, a leading technical university in the country, expanded its network to support the growth in e-learning and student enrollment.

“To ensure our switch port-count stays ahead of enrollment, and to cater for higher bandwidth demand driven by multimedia usage, we needed to deploy more high-performance access switches and security on the network,” said Nasrudin Abd Shukor, Director of ICT, UniMAP.

Since it first opened in the early 2000s with 116 students, UniMAP has grown to 7000 students and 1500 staff across 20 locations in Perlis, Malaysia’s most northern state.

To date, UniMAP has channelled as much as 15 per cent of its management budget to build its ICT infrastructure. A significant part of this investment is dedicated to support teaching and learning interests. The University e-learning project makes up a big portion of this expenditure.

“Our selection criteria was simple: we are looking for a new network, next-generation and a leader in the high performance networking vendor to provide reliable, high-density switches that are easy to manage. Juniper Networks’ cost-effective solution very much fits the bill, with common operating system that runs switching, routing and security to streamline deployment and administration.”

At UniMAP, all courses are conducted on campus. E-learning, as a component of selected courses, is introduced to complement traditional face-to-face teaching. Since students and faculty spend a lot of time on campus, a dependable and robust network is critical to support the blended learning experience.

“The reality for campus network administrators, especially in fast-growing institutions like UniMAP, is that they have to keep adding capacity, improving availability and ensuring security in tandem,” said Wan Ahmad Kamal, Managing Director, Juniper Networks Malaysia.

“That is a difficult balance to achieve with point solutions, but a lot easier to manage if your network systems are designed to work together and orchestrated by a single operating system,” he added.

UniMAP has now deployed Ethernet Switches in its wiring closets, providing 48 ports per switch and four Gigabit Ethernet uplinks to the aggregation layer of the campus network. Switches are built around an ASIC-based Packet Forwarding Engine with an integrated CPU that consistently delivers wire-rate forwarding and carrier-class reliability.

The university has also deployed Security Gateways at the main data centre and one of its distributed-campus to provide multi-dimensional security and routing that can be scaled to meet future requirements. With a single operating system running across all network devices, UniMAP administrators can integrate security into a streamlined network management process that maximizes productivity and network service availability.