



CASE STUDY

Brooklyn Public Library

SOLUTION SUMMARY

- Eastern DataComm helped Brooklyn Public Library replace 60 aging phone systems with the ShoreTel(Mitel) Unified Communications solution.
- Cutting-edge VoIP solution provides a unified platform for the library's 60 locations, with extension dialing and call transfer capabilities throughout the organization.
- Easy-to-use interface eliminates management and voice mail administration headaches.
- Eastern DataComm's experience and project management expertise ensured a smooth rollout with the flexibility to adjust the implementation plan as older equipment failed.
- Ability to eliminate unneeded phone lines and local toll charges for branch-to-branch calls resulted in immediate cost savings.
- The ShoreTel(Mitel) solution provides the features and functionality to support the library's changing needs.

Eastern DataComm helps **Brooklyn Public Library** replace 60 legacy phone systems with the ShoreTel(Mitel) Unified Communications platform, reducing costs, simplifying administration and bringing much needed functionality.

Brooklyn Public Library is an independent system, separate from the New York City and Queens libraries, that serves the borough's 2.5 million residents. Through its landmarked Central Library, separate Business & Career Library and 58 neighborhood libraries, it offers patrons millions of books, thousands of public programs and the use of more than 1,100 free Internet-accessible computers.

When Telecom Manager Dino Kusulas joined **Brooklyn Public Library** in 2004, he was faced with administering 60 separate phone systems. In 1998, the library had standardized on the NEC platform, purchasing a large system for the main location and smaller systems for its branches. By 2004, most of those systems were no longer supported by the manufacturer.

The library made do for several more years until the time became right to explore a new phone system. Kusulas called upon **Eastern DataComm** to propose a solution.

"When I was with my previous employer I had worked with **Eastern DataComm** on a dozen or so cabling projects. Their cabling team does showcase work so I continued to bring them in for cabling projects here at the library," he said.

"That said, I knew that **Eastern DataComm** has always been more than just a cabling organization — they do work in networking and voice as well. When the opportunity arose to start the discussion about the phone system, I had them come in and show us what the possibilities were."

Brooklyn Public Library looked at a couple of different options but found that the ShoreTel(Mitel) Unified Communications system offered the best mix of features, price and ease of use. When some grant money became available, the library called upon **Eastern DataComm** to implement the ShoreTel(Mitel) solution.

RELIEVING HEADACHES

Kusulas was eager to upgrade to a modern phone system that could be administered more easily than the legacy PBX. Each of the existing NEC systems had to be managed separately using a dial up connection and arcane commands.

“Before I came on board the organization was very dependent on a vendor to handle even the most mundane tasks,” said Kusulas. “I lobbied against that and said, ‘There’s got to be a way we can remotely manage these things.’ And there was — via a blazing-fast, 2400-baud modem connection. Any work that I did was command-line driven. I had to get the manual out and become familiar with the more common changes, and everything had to be done site by site.”

The most arduous and time-consuming task was voice mail administration.

“The voice mail greeting at each location is highly customized,” Kusulas said. “Each phone system could only store one greeting, so for every holiday I had to dial into 60 different systems and record a greeting stating that we would be closed. The entire process, if I was diligent and made no mistakes, would run about three hours. Needless to say, my vocal cords were shredded.

“And then at the end of the event I had to undo it all, and rerecord the standard greetings. Every few weeks there was something, and we continued doing it that way for the better part of 10 years.”

The ShoreTel(Mitel) solution cured those headaches. The ShoreTel(Mitel) Communicator software makes it easy to administer the system, record greetings and more — all from a single graphical interface.

“Administration is a lot more intuitive because you’re dealing with a graphical interface rather than a command line,” said Kusulas.

ACCORDING TO PLAN

Of course, voice mail functionality is only one small part of the ShoreTel(Mitel) solution. The new system gives users all the latest communications features, and provides one platform uniting all 60 locations.

“**Eastern DataComm** helped us create a five-digit dialing plan with the first two digits identifying the branch and the last three representing the extensions we use to identify various departments or functions,” Kusulas said. “At first people were reticent to change but once they understood the concept they realized the benefits. In the past they couldn’t transfer a patron to another branch but now they can do that easily.

“The ShoreTel(Mitel) Mobility routers will enable us to extend the phone system to our executives who travel a lot. Their work extension can reside on their smartphones so they can receive calls anywhere in the world.”

The implementation of the ShoreTel(Mitel) system went very smoothly. **Eastern DataComm** worked closely with Kusulas to develop the dialing plan and coordinate the project. They completed the rollout location by location over the course of about six months.

“The project plan was broken out to about three branches a week,” Kusulas said. “We had to deviate from the plan a couple of times because, wouldn’t you know it, some of the older equipment began to fail. Luckily we had new equipment available but it took some coordination. **Eastern DataComm** had to make sure we had the equipment staged, and I had to coordinate with the carrier to make sure the phone lines were properly converted for the ShoreTel system. But it went well. We set up the new system and once it was up and running and the phones were deployed, we just clipped the lines over from the old system to the new.”

LOOKING AHEAD

Eastern DataComm has helped **Brooklyn Public Library** realize some significant cost savings. The library was able to eliminate unneeded phone lines and reduce local toll charges for branch-to-branch calls.

“We saw savings almost immediately,” said Kusulas.

“About halfway through our deployment, I noticed that the local toll portion of the billing had been reduced by about \$700 a month. Now that branch-to-branch calls are made by dialing extensions rather than out through the public switched telephone network, we should see further reduction in local toll costs. And when we roll out the conference bridge feature those costs should go down as well.”

Most importantly, **Eastern DataComm** has provided the library with a platform for the future. Kusulas continues to look for ways to improve communications using the ShoreTel(Mitel) system.

“We wanted a platform that would grow with us and would change with our needs,” he said. “A great example is our help desk. Currently we have three separate work-groups that accept higher volume calls — our telephone reference group, business reference group and general information. But a lot of calls that go to our reference librarians tend to be general information requests. So there has been some discussion about having all calls come into one central number and from there be transferred to the appropriate groups. The ShoreTel system gives us the flexibility to do that.”

Whatever the future holds, **Brooklyn Public Library** has a reliable platform with a smooth upgrade path — and a strong partner in **Eastern DataComm**.

“They’ve been invaluable,” said Kusulas. “Any issues we’ve had tend to be on our side, but whenever we’ve had a question or something seemed glitchy, they have resolved it very quickly.”