

## Case Study



# University of Oxford selects Starline Track Busway as Power Distribution System for its University Shared Data Centre

The University of Oxford, based in Oxford, England, is a world-leading centre of learning, teaching and research and the oldest university in the English-speaking world. In order to run the day to day operations of the university's networks, email, etc. it employs an IT Services Department.

IT Services at Oxford look after the university's central IT, which includes the email system, main Internet connection used by all departments, and the network infrastructure itself along with necessary firewalls and network security. As part of the infrastructure, the university has four internal data centres that the IT Services Department manages.

## Problem

At the time, in order to supply power to the server racks in its data centres Oxford was using hard wired 32 amp commando sockets in an overhead system with fixed locations. The biggest issue with this design came whenever

IT Services had to change anything around; this would entail calling in an electrician to run new cables in a labor-intensive process. This also then involved downtime- which is detrimental to any mission critical environment.

In addition to the downtime and lengthy process involved with making electrical changes, Oxford also experienced issues with several circuits tripping. Due to a lack of localized protection, a single occurrence would cause multiple outages, leaving the IT Services team to examine a tremendous number of breakers at the main distribution panel in order to attempt to fix the problem.

## Solution

During an expansion of its existing University Shared Data Centre, a space with just under 70 server racks, the University of Oxford chose Starline Track Busway for its power distribution. The decision was made after a

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recommendation from the university's biggest rival—Cambridge University.

"It's all about mitigating risk," says David Birds, Data Centres Manager for IT Services at the University of Oxford. "From our point of view, it (Starline) makes life a lot easier. It's easier to isolate and identify any electrical faults that you've had on the server. You're not having to go back to a large distribution board. You're going directly above the rack that you want, and you can visually see that the breaker has tripped."

The team at Oxford appreciated the flexibility that Starline Track Busway offered them. They chose the 250 amp system, with plug-in units drawing 32 amps, single phase, with the capability of converting to 3 phase if they needed. The added flexibility of the overhead, open-channel busway system also meant that any necessary electrical changes would no longer require an electrician, so Oxford could avoid the associated future added costs and downtime.

## PROJECT SPECIFICS



### Size of Facility

Approximately 70 server racks

### Starline Products Implemented

- Starline Track Busway 250T5 system
- 32 amp, single phase Starline Plug-In Units

## Result

By choosing Starline Track Busway for its University Shared Data Centre, the University of Oxford now has a flexible power distribution system that ensures calling in electricians to re-cable will be a thing of the past.

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*David Birds*

*Data Centres Manager,  
University of Oxford*

Most importantly, the threat of downtime—which is the primary concern of all mission critical environments—is minimized.

IT Services can now take advantage of the ease of using a hot swappable system, while resting assured that it also provides better electrical protection. Being the first Data Centres Manager employed at Oxford

back in January 2009, David Birds has witnessed significant transformation over the years- from a very old main frame room to a state-of-the-art university-owned data centre.

"Give the Starline product a go and check it out," says Birds. "Because from the research we've done, it's one of the best on the market. We're very happy with it."

## About Starline

Starline is a global leader in power distribution equipment. For more than 30 years, Starline has provided data center, retail, health care, laboratory, higher education and industrial facilities with the most flexible, reliable and customizable power distribution systems on the market today.



250 Amp Starline Track Busway Installed

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