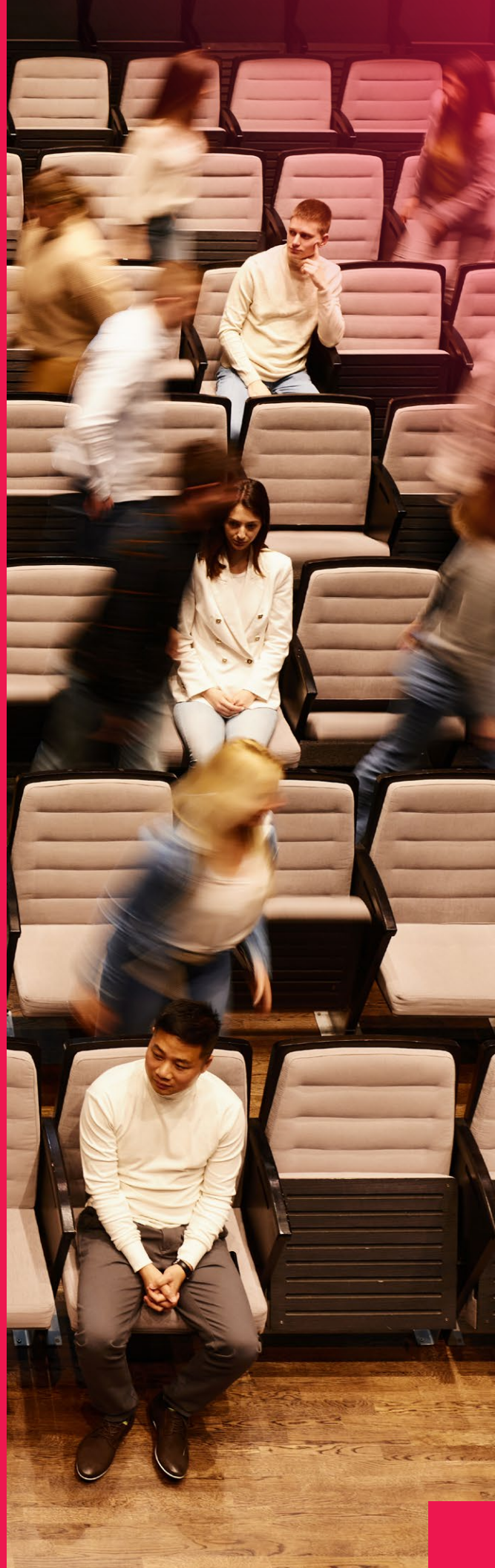


THE CAMPUS CONNECTIVITY GAP: STUDENTS AND FACULTY EXPECT MORE

2025 Campus Connectivity Report





Connectivity is the lifeblood of the student experience

Learning or teaching, living or working, connectivity is the new foundation of campus life. It shapes how students learn, how faculty teach, and how staff manage the daily operations of a university. It's the invisible infrastructure that surrounds students 24 hours a day in all aspects of life. From the first day in a residence hall to the last exam in a lecture hall, the quality of internet access now defines much of the student and faculty experience.

This year's Campus Connectivity Report highlights both progress and persistent gaps. Students and staff are clear about what they need: reliable, seamless connectivity that works across every corner of campus. Yet too often, the networks they depend on fall short, especially in residence halls and large campus venues. These disruptions do not just create frustration. They affect academic performance, strain well-being, and weaken engagement in campus life.

The lesson for higher education leaders is direct. Connectivity must be treated as core infrastructure, essential to academic success, student satisfaction, and the long-term competitiveness of the institution. Incremental fixes are not enough. What is required is a comprehensive, campus-wide approach to building, and operating, networks that can meet today's demands and tomorrow's expectations.

Operating a campus network is a 24-hour job, seven days a week. It requires monitoring, troubleshooting and maintenance, as well as customer service for both faculty and students who often are the heaviest users in the overnight hours. Campus leaders must implement an operational plan to meet and exceed expectations under those conditions. We've learned on the campuses that we serve, they can better attend to their constituents through a partner, and free up their own staff to focus on innovation and future initiatives.

At Boldyn Networks, we partner with institutions to deliver those services. Together, we can close the gap between expectation and experience and create campuses where students, faculty, and staff are supported in everything they set out to achieve.

■ SCOTT DROSSOS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, BOLDYN NETWORKS

Methodology

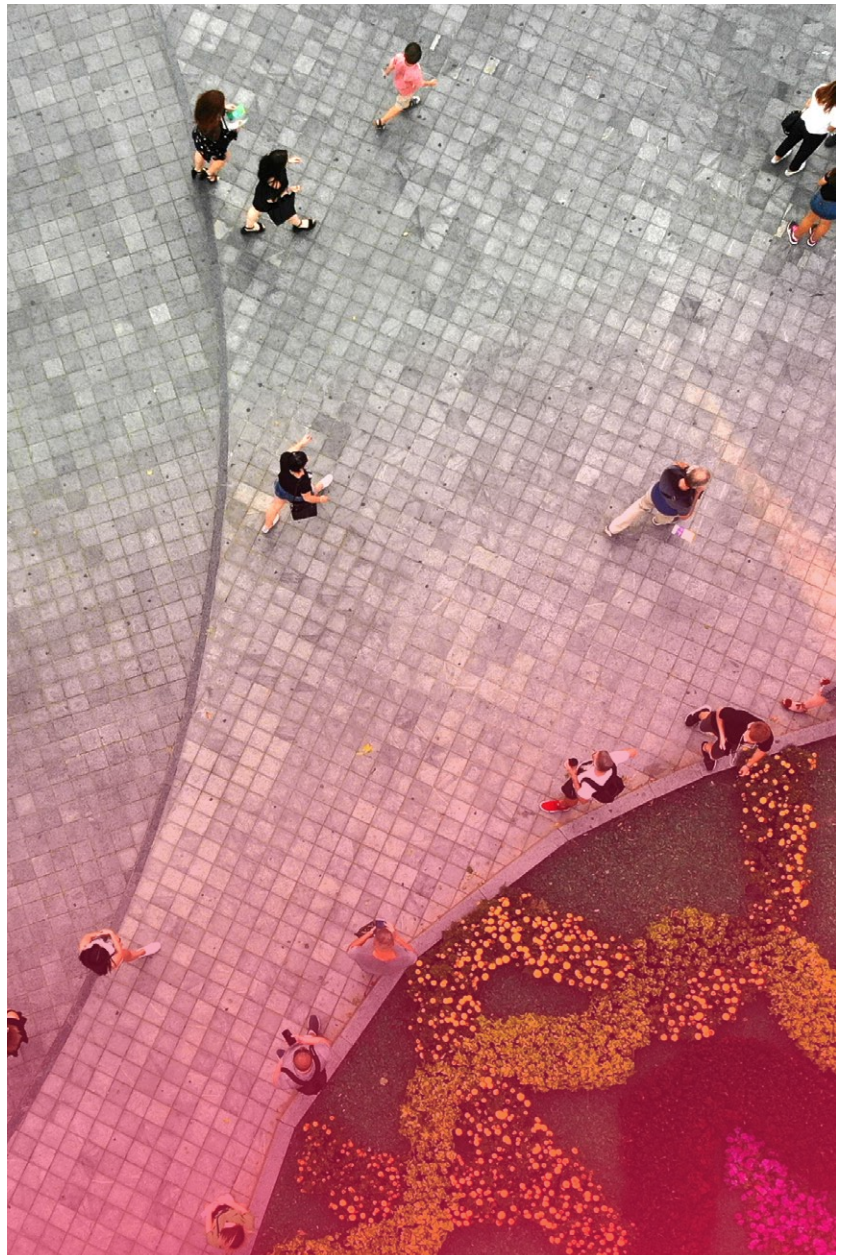
The 2025 State of Internet Connectivity at Universities from Boldyn Networks is a survey of 1087 college students at public and private universities in the U.S. and 250 non-IT, full-time college staff in the U.S. Respondents were sourced via an online panel in the spring of 2025.

Connectivity in residence halls: Expectations vs. reality gap

For many students, the residence hall is the center of daily life. It is where they study, relax, and socialize. In short, it's home. Reliable internet access here is not a luxury; it is essential. Yet the data shows a striking gap between what students need and what they receive.

Nearly three-quarters of students say consistent internet access in their residence hall is essential. Yet only about a quarter are "very satisfied" with their experience. That 47-point gap illustrates one of the most pressing connectivity challenges on today's campuses: students describe slow speeds, dropped connections, and frequent device overload as common frustrations. More than two-thirds report issues connecting multiple devices, while more than 70% have turned to mobile data or personal hotspots just to get through their day.

These problems are not occasional inconveniences. Four in five students living in residence halls reported at least one significant connectivity issue in the past year. Students report turning in assignments late due to bad connections. The result is an environment where students often feel unsupported at the exact time and place they most need reliable access. Closing this gap should be an urgent priority for campus leaders.

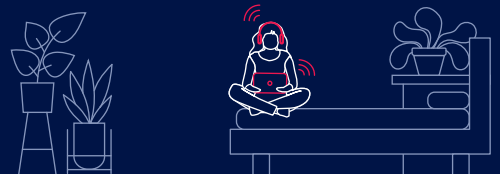


Key stats

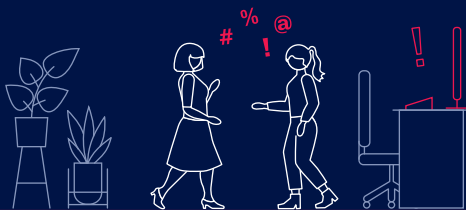
73% of students say consistent internet in residence halls is essential



Only 26% are "very satisfied" with residence hall connectivity



47% gap between importance (73%) and satisfaction (26%)



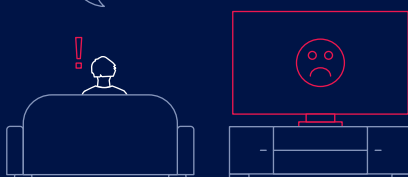
71% have switched to mobile data or a personal hotspot due to poor Wi-Fi

"Sometimes getting my work done is very hard when the internet is slow or not working. If it doesn't work in my residence hall, I need to move to another location, and my residence hall is a 20-minute walk away from main campus."



68% have experienced issues connecting multiple devices

"I can't game, I can't reliably watch TV, I can't video chat. It sucks."



81% of residence hall students report at least one issue in the past year

"Some of my lab work requires me to disconnect and reconnect to the Wi-Fi multiple times, and if I don't get it right, I lose all my data."



Academic and administrative buildings:

The ‘dropout’ problem

Connectivity inside academic and administrative buildings presents a different but equally important challenge. Classrooms, lecture halls, labs, and faculty offices are where the core mission of education takes place. When disruptions occur, the consequences are especially damaging.

Students report that only 16% consider campus internet “extremely reliable,” and just one in five describe themselves as “very satisfied” with connectivity overall. Nearly three-quarters of students and more than six in ten staff experience disruptions several times per month, and about a quarter face issues weekly. For students, the consequences are clear: 84% say poor internet has directly impacted their schoolwork. Staff also feel the effects, with 86% reporting that disruptions interfere with their jobs.

Despite the regularity of disruption, staff report a higher rate of satisfaction than students. David Hinson, Boldyn’s Campus Chief Information Officer, believes these statistics tell a story experienced from two sides.

“Staff satisfaction levels being twice as high as students tells us two things: First, administrative networks are prioritized because they are mission critical. Second, students feel like their needs are secondary. That is a gap campuses must close.”

■ DAVID HINSON

BOLDYN’S CAMPUS CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

The imbalance highlights how institutions must establish priorities to ensure that students and faculty alike can rely on strong connectivity wherever learning and teaching take place.





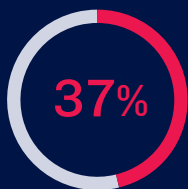
Connectivity in campus venues: Missed moments, missed connections

Large venues like stadiums, arenas, and auditoriums are integral to campus life, but are also the nexus of students, visitors and alumni that represent the brand and hospitality of the school. They host athletic events, performances, ceremonies, and large-scale classes that shape the student, parent, alumni and visitor experience. When connectivity fails in these spaces, all of these stakeholders feel cut off from the moment.

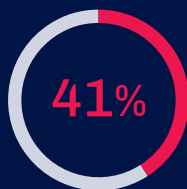
Approximately 4 in 10 students report connectivity issues in campus venues, and staff report similar struggles. The inability to text, post on social media, or even make calls topped the complaints of students and staff. For a quarter of students, poor connectivity even meant they could not open their digital tickets to get in.

When the network fails in these moments, the school's fans, guests, students and employees feel disconnected not just from the internet but from the experience itself. For universities striving to create vibrant, inclusive communities, ensuring reliable connectivity in venues is essential to keeping students, faculty and visitors engaged and connected.

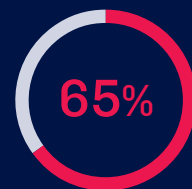
Key stats



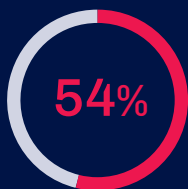
of students report issues in
venues like stadiums and arenas



of staff report
similar issues



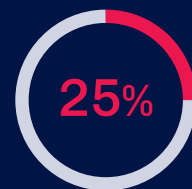
could not text
during events



could not post on
social media



could not make calls



of students could not open
their digital ticket



Connectivity gaps among genders: When expectations clash with experience

Not all students experience connectivity challenges in the same way. Gender and living arrangements significantly shape expectations and outcomes.

Female students tend to hold higher expectations for reliable connectivity in residence halls, yet they report lower satisfaction than their male peers. The result is a 58% gap between importance and satisfaction for women, compared with a 34% gap for men. This disconnect often translates into greater stress and longer hours spent on schoolwork for female students who must navigate unreliable networks.

Male students are more likely to respond to poor connectivity with drastic actions such as moving off campus or voicing complaints publicly. Together, these differences reveal how connectivity issues can amplify inequities and create uneven campus experiences. Addressing them requires solutions that account for diverse needs and expectations across the student body.

Key stats

Female students: 58% satisfaction gap



Women report stress and longer time on schoolwork due to poor connectivity

Male students: 34% satisfaction gap



Men are more likely to move off campus or complain publicly

Connectivity and campus leadership: Complaints rise and IT *needs* support

Students' frustrations are compounded by the perception that campus leadership undervalues their concerns. Only 27% of students believe administrators view reliable internet as "extremely important," and 30% say universities are investing too little in connectivity infrastructure.

The gap between what students expect and what they believe administrators deliver creates a cycle of dissatisfaction. A strong majority, 71%, say they would report or complain if internet reliability failed, signaling that students are willing to hold their institutions accountable.

At the same time, IT support services are widely seen as insufficient. More than a third of students are less than satisfied with IT support.

David Hinson offered a view on how to serve students and bolster IT teams:

"Students believe their school's connectivity investment is a patchwork that never quite hits the mark, while in reality their IT staff are trapped in a perpetual break-fix loop keeping them from delivering consistently dependable services. Managed Services offer a way out of the morass, giving students reliable always-on connectivity that they can count on and freeing IT teams to focus on innovation instead of firefighting. When nearly a third of students believe IT is underdelivering, that shift is not just essential — it's an existential necessity."

■ **DAVID HINSON**

BOLDYN'S CAMPUS CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Key stats



27%

of students believe administrators see reliable internet as "extremely important"



30%

believe universities invest too little in internet infrastructure



71%

of students would report or complain if internet reliability fails



IT services are widely viewed as needing improvement.

38%

less than satisfied

Smart campus momentum: From frustration to innovation

Despite widespread frustrations, students and staff remain enthusiastic about the potential of “smart campus” innovations. Interest is nearly universal, with 96% saying they want access to enhanced, digitally connected services.

Among the most desired features are real-time updates on study space availability, parking, and network outages. Students in residence halls also express high demand for real-time laundry monitoring, a seemingly small feature that nonetheless reflects a broader desire for seamless, digitally enabled living.

These expectations underscore a broader shift and opportunity. As students become more accustomed to a smart home, they want a similar experience in their new home on campus.

“Schools must first ensure their network is fast, reliable, and future-ready. We believe colleges and universities of all sizes that think holistically about their networks will go from drowning in dropped Wi-Fi tickets to unlocking innovations like smart sensors. A smart campus is not out of reach, and students’ expectations will only accelerate. Campuses that anticipate the need will be well positioned to attract and retain students.”

■ **DAVID HINSON**

BOLDYN'S CAMPUS CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Key stats

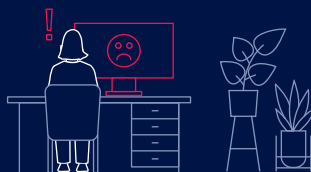
96%

of students and staff are interested in smart campus experiences

Most desired features include:

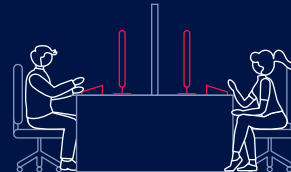
40%

want connectivity outage alerts



46%

want real-time study space availability



40%

want parking availability



Closing the connectivity gap:

Key takeaways & recommendations

The findings of the 2025 report leave little doubt: a critical gap remains between expectations and reality.

Nearly three-quarters of students report disruptions multiple times each month. More than four in five say poor connectivity affects their schoolwork, and nearly as many say it impacts their well-being. Only a small fraction, 16%, describe their campus internet as extremely reliable.

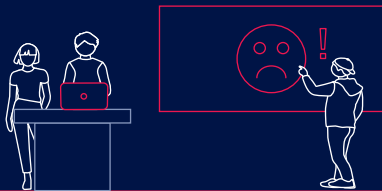
For institutions, the implications are profound. Students equate reliable connectivity with core aspects of their college experience, including academic quality and campus safety. Falling short risks not only their academic performance but also their overall satisfaction and willingness to recommend their institution to others.

To close the gap, universities should focus on three priorities:

- 1st** Invest in campus-wide infrastructure that treats connectivity as a fundamental utility.
- 2nd** Address the persistent pain points in residence halls, where expectations are highest and frustrations most acute.
- 3rd** Reimagine IT operational models that activate and energize core institutional knowledge, empowering their technology teams to be responsible, reliable, and proactive.

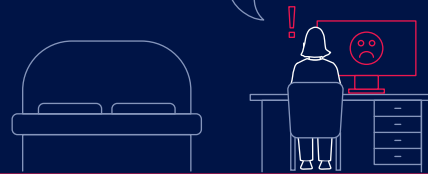
Key stats

73% of students experience disruptions multiple times per month



84% say poor internet affects schoolwork

"Certain buildings do not get data service, so when Wi-Fi is down, there is no way to access school materials."



79% say poor internet impacts well-being

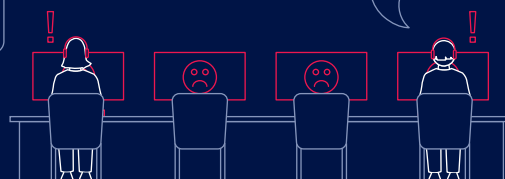
"If the internet was more reliable, then school wouldn't be as stressful."



Only **16%** describe campus internet as "extremely reliable"

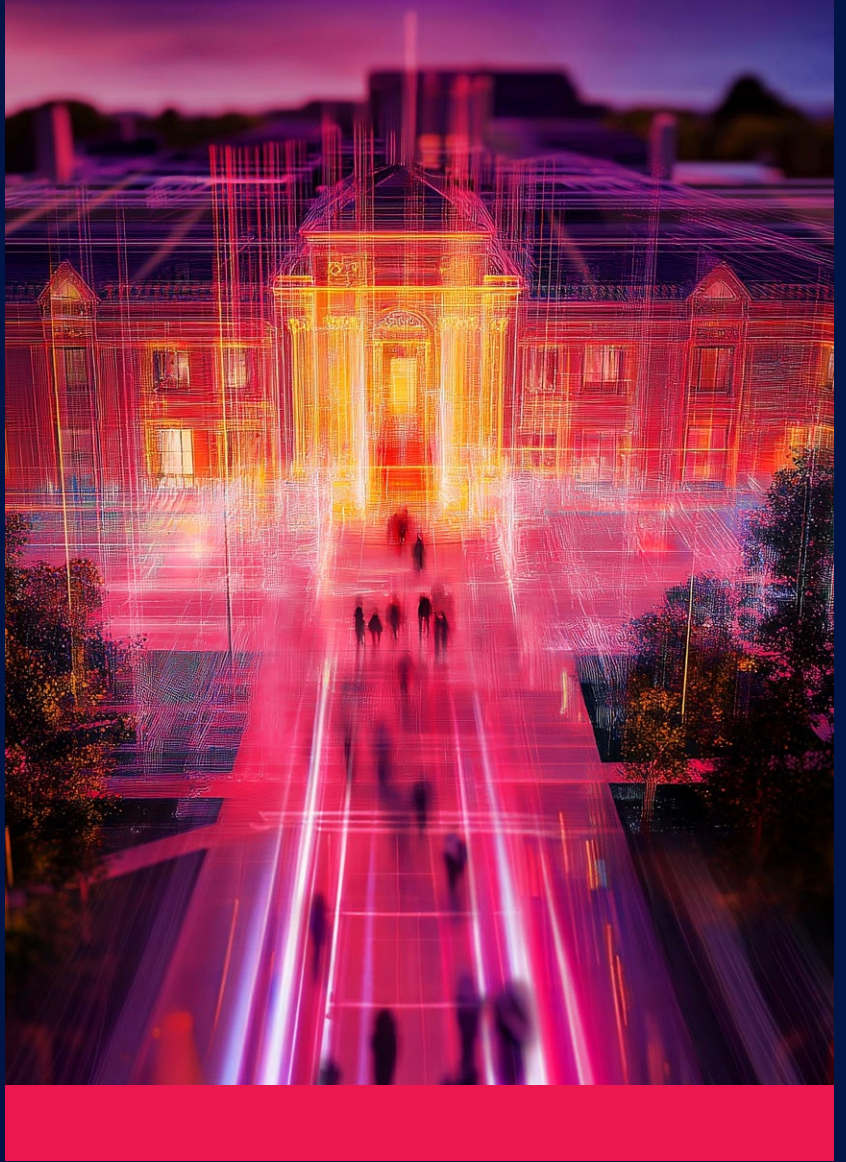
"It would be so slow it could take 20 minutes to answer 1 out of 48 questions."

"One time there was an internet malfunction during a quiz I had, thus the score didn't get documented. I had to retake it."



The message is clear. Connectivity is no longer a “nice to have.” It is foundational to modern higher education. Institutions that act decisively will be best positioned to foster success, well-being, and long-term loyalty among both students and staff.





Boldyn Networks is one of the world's largest neutral host providers and a leader in private networks, delivering the advanced shared network infrastructure needed for a smart, inclusive, and sustainable future. It brings together the combined scale and expertise of industry-leading companies with a single purpose: to unlock the power of an interconnected future. From interconnected transit, venues and enterprises, smart cities, next-generation and bespoke private networks, to smart campuses, Boldyn enables new possibilities in the way people live, work and play.

Bringing connectivity to the most complex environments. Our portfolio is harnessing fibre, accelerating 5G, and looking beyond to the next breakthroughs.

With headquarters in the UK, Our global operations span North America, Europe, and Asia. Boldyn Networks. Reimagine tomorrow. Transform today.

Learn more visit boldyn.com