



VMWARE VSAN CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

NEW COLLEGE DURHAM

For almost a decade, New College Durham has been partnering with Phoenix Software and VMware to revolutionise its IT estate for the better

New College Durham is a medium-sized university based in North East England and caters for both higher education students, as well as further education students, aged 16 to 18, who are focusing on building vocational and professional skills.

Ongoing austerity measures have meant less money for many academic institutions, including New College Durham and although the institution has money set aside for lean times, departments nevertheless must work to control costs while continuing to provide high-quality teaching and resources to all students. Like other departments, the university's information and communications technology (ICT) group must justify all expenditures. "Our funding is directly tied to student enrolment and course completion, so we need to ensure that any IT system we invest in will impress prospects and enable current students to be more productive and achieve better grades," says George Wraith, Head of ICT, New College Durham.

AT-A-GLANCE

Challenge

Ongoing austerity measures have meant less money for many academic institutions, including New College Durham and although the institution has money set aside for lean times, departments nevertheless must work to control costs while continuing to provide high-quality teaching and resources to all students.

Solution

From the initial server virtualisation project through to virtual desktops, DRaaS via VMware vCloud Air and virtual storage in the form of vSAN, New College Durham is on a journey which it anticipates will continue for many years to come, with the logical next steps being network virtualisation and the cloud.

Benefits

- Enhanced flexibility for students and staff through virtualisation
- Robust data protection and disaster recovery with the public cloud

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George Wraith
Head of ICT
New College Durham

ENHANCING FLEXIBILITY THROUGH VIRTULISATION

The imperative to reduce spending while still offering robust technology resources has led New College Durham to have a long-standing relationship with both Phoenix Software and VMware, one that began in 2008.

Working in conjunction with the team at Phoenix Software, the university's ICT group initially embarked on a project to virtualise servers. Using the VMware vSphere server virtualisation platform, the group was able to enhance agility of its infrastructure and support new services, such as voice over IP (VoIP), while reducing costs. “When we took that first step, little did we know that it was the beginning of a journey that would revolutionise our IT estate for the better,” says Wraith.

The success of the first project led the ICT group to virtualise desktops. By adopting a VMware virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) solution, the group was able to purchase cost-effective thin clients instead of more traditional PCs. “When we ran a full business evaluation of capital costs against projected savings, the benefits were clear—making significant savings for our business,” says Wraith.

PROTECTING RESOURCES WITH PUBLIC CLOUD

The ICT group subsequently turned to the public cloud to improve its disaster recovery strategy. The disaster-recovery-as-a-service (DRaaS) solution provided through VMware vCloud Air enables robust, offsite data protection, predictable budgeting, and the ability to prevent over-provisioning, which can eat into a tight budget.

At the same time, the DRaaS solution helped control management burdens and costs. “We wanted a solution which could be operated using the same tools and skills that our IT team was used to,” says Wraith. “VMware vCloud Air offered this.”

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE BY VIRTUALISING STORAGE

When it came time to refresh storage, New College Durham also took the virtualisation route. The VMware vSAN software-defined solution improved storage performance and functionality for the ICT group as well as the college's students, while avoiding the costs of replacing the physical storage area network (SAN). “In our evaluation, it looked as though we would be saving in the region of £100,000 to £120,000 by implementing vSAN and not having to refresh our physical storage,” says Wraith.

Going forward, the ICT group plans to take the next step in virtualisation. According to Wraith, “We anticipate the journey continuing with network virtualisation and hopefully, sometime in the future, moving into the cloud.”

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

To find out how we can help you transform any aspect of your IT estate, contact the Phoenix Team now on:

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