PHOENIX

WESTMINSTER ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE

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Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) is a college that offers full-time and part-time study in the daytime, evenings and weekends to adults in Westminster.

It is the borough's only specialist adult education provider, educating over 12,000 students in 80 venues.

CHALLENGE

As with most educational establishments, Westminster Adult Education Service is heavily vested in Microsoft Office software due to the generous discounts that Microsoft offers to academia. With Office 2007 now a few generations out-of-date, however, the college was keen to take advantage of the new functionality, reliability and support available for the latest version of Office (which at the time was Office 2013).

Access to features was not the only reason why the college was keen to upgrade. With most of its adult students coming into contact with Office software in their places of work, it can be difficult – particularly for less experienced computer

AT-A-GLANCE

Challenge
The college's out-of-date Office 2007 software was hampering its productivity and holding students back, while the onsite email server was struggling to provide the amount of mailbox storage that its users required.

Solution
Microsoft Office 365 subscription on Student Advantage licence, providing all staff and 12,000+ students with the latest versions of Office software on up to five devices, a 50GB cloud mailbox and 1TB of personal cloud storage.

Benefits
Incredible value. A significant upgrade to the college's software and IT services for less than the cost of acquiring traditional licences for Office 2013 for its staff.

users – to transition between different versions of the software, especially if the software they are learning on at college is a version or two behind their employer's. Working with the latest version of Office was also particularly important for maintaining the quality of the IT courses that the college provides.

Additionally, with such a broad range of students from different social and economic backgrounds, the college could not expect all of its students to invest the £100+ in their own copies of Office software to use at home, which prevented the college from being able fully to utilise Microsoft Office across all its courses.

At the same time that the outdated Office software was limiting the college's ability to meet its students' needs, the college's onsite Exchange email server was also proving inadequate for its users. With only a fixed amount of onsite storage serving a growing number of users, the college had to restrict each user's mailbox to just 200MB. This was far too inadequate to meet their needs, requiring users routinely to clear their inbox just to maintain a minimum level of functionality. The college was keen to look at a solution that would bring both its Office software and email services up to date.

SOLUTION

Having seen numerous promotions of Office 365 from Microsoft, WAES was keen to evaluate whether Microsoft's new approach to its Office software would meet the college's needs. It therefore sought out a software partner that had equally good experience with both Office 365 and the educational sector, and could provide detailed and impartial analysis of whether Office 365 was the best solution for its needs. Its research led it to Phoenix Software. Taking into account WAES's dual needs of bringing its core Office software up-to-date while eliminating the frequent deadlock in its email systems, Phoenix was able to demonstrate how academic licensing of Office 365 was the perfect solution for the college. Taking into consideration the feedback of its peers, Phoenix Software's track record in the sector and WAES's own experience during the consultation, it selected Phoenix Software to undertake the migration.

Through consultation with Phoenix Software, WAES took advantage of the significant discounts available through the Student Advantage licence: WAES was able to procure all of the benefits of Office 365 for less than it would have cost simply to purchase the latest version of Office for its staff only.

The additional value gained from switching to the Office 365 subscription model was significant. In addition to providing the college with the latest version of Microsoft Office software at a significant discount, Student Advantage provides the additional benefit of granting every student a subscription to Office 365 ProPlus, at absolutely no cost to the student. ProPlus includes the latest versions of all of Microsoft's desktop Office applications including Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Access, Publisher, Outlook, Skype and InfoPath, in addition to web applications and Android/iOS apps of Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

For the mailbox, Office 365 provides every user with a 50GB mailbox – 250 times larger than the 200MB that WAES was able to provide previously. The mailbox is also hosted in the cloud, which meant the college could provide the additional space without needing to invest in additional onsite storage.

In addition to licensing advice, Phoenix Software also provided the college with a comprehensive document detailing exactly what was required to setup Office 365. Due to the significant number of users and the college's reliance on its Microsoft software, the migration was conducted over two weeks; the first week included the federation with the Office 365 cloud platform and the college's Active Directory; while the second week included the configuration and migration of all mailboxes.

BENEFITS

Since migrating over to an Office 365 subscription the college has not looked back. The benefits over its previous Office 2007 licence are significant:

- **Value for money** – Office 365 represents significant value for the college. For less than the cost of buying the latest version of Office for its staff, WAES has gained an additional 50GB mailbox for every single user (staff and students alike), 1TB of online storage and the ability to provide every student with the complete Office suite for up to five devices each – all without having to spend a penny spent on additional onsite hardware

- **Cloud storage for every user** – with every student and member of staff gaining 1TB of cloud storage on Microsoft's highly secure and reliable OneDrive service, not only does this ensure that all storage needs are met, but it does so without the need for the college to purchase and maintain a significant physical SAN estate in its data centre.

- **50GB online mailbox** – the significant size of the mailboxes provided with Office 365 has eliminated the deadlock that had become a consistent annoyance for users when they routinely exceeded their 200MB limit. What's more, because the storage is provided in the cloud it has also significantly reduced the load on the college's on-premise Exchange server.

- **Multi-device support** – rounding out the incredible value of the licence, every student can use their Office 365 licence on up to five different devices, so they can work on their documents from whichever device they choose.

- **Latest version of Office, always** – as a subscription service, Office 365 enables the college to install the latest versions of Office software whenever it becomes available. This means that the college and its 12,000 students can already upgrade to Office 2016.

- **Level playing field** – knowing that every student has access to the complete suite of Office applications and Microsoft services means that WAES can fully leverage these features to the benefit of its students. This includes advanced services outside of the core Office applications such as OneDrive for backup and sharing of files, Exchange email for seamless communication with students on all devices, and even Skype for remote tutoring and support.

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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