How a leading university implemented Windows Virtual Desktop

CASE STUDY

The Challenge

The COVID-19 situation created challenges for this university in ensuring that lecturers were in a position to deliver online learning to their students and at the same time that students were able to access the required apps and environment in order to continue their learning remotely. Codec proposed a solution using Microsoft Azure Windows Virtual Desktop for the university.

Background

As well as the usual commercial and market pressures that all institutions have had to contend with, the university also faced a significant new 'people problem' brought on by the Covid 19 pandemic. Universities are places where people come together to exchange ideas and learn, but the challenge for the college was how this could be done safely? How could lecturers deliver their classes online to students and how would those students access those lectures and learning materials remotely?

Speed was of the essence in finding a suitable solution that could accommodate the university and its students. To go from an "in-person" university experience to remote leaning pretty much overnight presented a number of challenges for the IT department.

The Solution

The university engaged the services of Codec to find a solution. Codec advocated Windows Virtual Desktop and it has become the go-to platform

This university is recognised as one of the UK's leading research-intensive universities and has a global reputation for excellence. They provide a world class education and student experience and are are the forefront of leading innovation and impact through their global network of partnerships.

Company: A World Renowned University
Industry: Education
Country: Ireland
Employees: 10,000

Solution Featured

Windows Virtual Desktop (https://www.codec.ie/microsoft solutions/cloud-azure/)

supporting over 1,500 users initially, providing

secure access to over 130 specialised apps

remotely. Windows Virtual Desktop for Education combines the scale, security, and cost benefits of Azure and Microsoft 365 to deliver a virtualised modern desktop for the student population.

Windows Virtual Desktop was proposed as the ideal solution for the university for several key reasons:

• It's available FREE OF CHARGE under current A3 or A5 agreements for Educational bodies (only compute and storage are paid for)
• It could be deployed and scaled in minutes and the university would only use licenses during the academic year
• It ensured that a full desktop experience could be delivered securely from the cloud to any students' internet-based device
• It would enable the university to accelerate performance and lower costs at the same time
• It simplified user management experience with a single interface on Azure
• It delivered the only multi-session Windows 10 virtual desktop experience
• Allowed access to a more secure, productive, virtual desktop experience on Azure with Microsoft 365

The Results

Using Windows Virtual Desktop, Codec is helping to facilitate remote access to learning for over 1,500 users initially from one campus. Students can use any device they have access to in order to use the full processing power of the university's systems remotely.

Using a native client app or even just a web browser, students and faculty members can use a PC, Mac, laptop, tablet or even a smartphone to run applications on remote servers, deliver lectures or complete course work.

The net result for the university's IT department is that instead of having to provide technical support to a potentially enormous range of platforms and devices, it can work with a vastly simplified system. There have also been a number of other benefits that have accrued from the implementation including:

• 130 specialised applications are available to students to access and use through their own devices. As its all managed in the cloud, it doesn't matter what kind of device is used to access these apps.
• Reduced support costs as all apps are managed in the cloud.
• Using this system also has significant advantages from a security point of view. Because the applications are served remotely from the cloud and data is stored in the cloud, that makes the system extremely secure.
• Additional security mechanisms built into the system such as multi-factor authentication makes sure that any person using the system is who they say they are. This means that sensitive data never leaves the university's equipment – all the user is getting is a window into that data, they don't ever actually have it stored locally.

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