

## Microsoft Canada uses innovative Cloud Slice technology to reduce hands-on lab costs by 93%

Part of Microsoft's culture is the belief that everyone can learn, grow and develop and that potential is nurtured, not predetermined. To support that culture and enable the IT professionals they support with their solutions to stay ahead of the technology curve, Microsoft Canada's Cloud Infrastructure group held learning camps. Typically, that meant gathering between 15 and 25 IT professionals for day-long intensive learning and then spending half an hour or more simply setting up the students to create accounts and get into Azure, so each could use their allocated Azure credits to complete training.

Given the rise of digital technology and a push for Digital Transformation, there has been an increased focus on Microsoft's training programs – they are seeing a heightened demand and needed a system that could accommodate and streamline to ensure they were helping both students and instructors in the most effective way.

Dave Martin, Microsoft Azure Cloud Infrastructure business lead at Microsoft Canada, said, "It can be hard to create that account and get the credit going. It's a long code, and if you make a mistake you have to start over again. So, we started to look for ways to reduce that potential frustration."

Costs were also a focus for the camps and a large investment went into providing students with the Azure credits they required to learn. To train that class of 25 students, "We were spending \$100 per student on Azure credits which equaled \$2,500 to run a single day-long session," Martin explained. "We wanted to see if there was a better way."

### Cloud Slice Transforms Class

Learn on Demand Systems introduced Martin and his team to Cloud Slice, a dynamically provisioned, load-balanced cloud subscription. Cloud Slice allows you to carve out a small slice of the capacity in a highly-managed way, serving it to a user.

The results?

- Faster, simpler setup
- Reduced cost per student
- Expanded class size
- More productive, more enjoyable learning experience

### Simple Setup. Simple Interface

With Cloud Slice, students of the Microsoft Canada events were up and running and ready for class in three minutes.

Martin said, "Now they click on a link and they're in the lab environment. That's it. They're done." Potential frustration is minimized before training even begins, and training can begin much sooner. "So, setup goes from a maximum of 30 minutes to a maximum of three, which is incredible," raved Martin. "That's the students' biggest challenge resolved."

The simplicity extends to the Learn on Demand System environment. "It's two panes: One where you are doing the work and one where you are literally given step-by-step instructions with links," he said. "It's super easy."



## Major Money Saver

By using Cloud Slice, Martin's team reduced their cost-per-student by \$97—from \$100 to \$3. "That's a massive amount of savings!" Martin exclaimed.

## More Seats for More Impact

The cost savings, as well as the scalability of Cloud Slice, enabled Martin and his team at Microsoft Canada to train more students at once and reinvest in future programs. Instead of holding Learning Camps with up to 25 students, the Microsoft Canada Cloud Infrastructure group now holds Tech Summits with 250-300 students attending and anywhere from 35-80 people in a learning lab environment at once.

## Productive Learning Experience

A somewhat cumbersome and tech-heavy setup under the previous model for classes required instructors with intimate and specific knowledge of Azure to walk students through the process and the learning session. The simplicity of Cloud Slice means Martin can leverage a variety of instructors for the class.

"I can go to any number of partners who have a competency in a certain area of Azure for an instructor," he explained. "I have a quick phone call with the instructor a week before class, and the instructor can learn how to use and deliver the lab literally in an hour. And, we can give instructors access, so they can sharpen their skills before giving the class."

Cloud Slice has enabled Microsoft Canada to provide an environment that encourages and inspires learning. "The benefits to us have been incredible in terms of getting quality learning out with a great experience to our customers and our prospects," explained Martin. "At the end of the day, it's all about the experience. It's the experience in the learning; it's the experience with our product at Microsoft."

## What's Next

Martin is excited about what's next for Microsoft Canada's Cloud Infrastructure group. As IT professionals progress from managing physical infrastructure to managing Cloud infrastructure and Cloud applications running from a Microsoft data center, they will need easy access to a training environment that works.

"There's a connection between what these people have been doing for the last 20 years and how they could be doing it in the Cloud," Martin said. Working with Learn on Demand Systems is enabling Microsoft Canada's Cloud Infrastructure group to provide the labs and resources IT pros need to simply, easily and seamlessly prepare for the future. "It's really helping them transform their careers."

Get access to a live Cloud Slice Lab Demo:

<https://lod.one/cloudslicelab>