Cloud drives cost savings and innovation at the University of Roehampton

With a Civica-supported migration to Microsoft Azure and Office 365, the university is on track to save £4.18m over 10 years.

Invest in a hardware refresh - or migrate to the cloud?

On the parkland campus of the University of Roehampton, south-west London, historic buildings sit alongside modern facilities including a purpose-built science lab and a state-of-the-art library. Now the university has a cutting-edge IT infrastructure to match, since migrating its applications and services from two on-campus data centres to the Microsoft Azure cloud.

Organic growth over a number of years meant that the university's IT infrastructure had become challenging to manage. Interdependencies made system upgrades time-consuming, while maintaining uptime and availability took up much of the IT team's time and effort. This left little time for proactive hardware maintenance and refreshes."**Above all, the IT infrastructure was ageing. We had to decide whether to continue investing £500,000 pa on hardware refreshes, or take a different approach**," says Hiren Patel, Roehampton's Deputy Director of IT Services. **"A Civica consultancy engagement made the benefits of migrating to the cloud crystal clear."**

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Outcomes

- **£4.18m projected savings on IT costs over 10 years**

- **35% return on investment** (ROI) on Civica Cloud Optimisation Engagement

- **One-third reduction** in server numbers

- Migration of **~12,000 students** and **~1,400 staff** to Office 365

£4.18m projected savings
over 10 years

13,400
students and staff using Office 365

35% ROI
on cost reduction of cloud spend

Roehampton's Civica-supported move to the cloud is delivering significant cost savings, powering innovation through adoption of new Microsoft services, and giving staff and students secure access to their work, both on and off campus.

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Assessing Roehampton's cloud readiness

Working with the university's IT team, Civica consultants carried out a Cloud Readiness Assessment to establish what hardware was in place. In many cases, server capacity was underused, as applications were running on dedicated hardware. A software licensing audit carried out as part of the assessment identified legacy software that was no longer in use, as well as over-licensing and shortfalls.

"**The Civica Cloud Readiness Assessment helped us work out what to keep and what to get rid of, so that only applications and services with a purpose and an owner were migrated to the cloud,**" says Patel. "**Perhaps most importantly, Civica helped us build a convincing business case for moving to the cloud, which included projected savings on IT costs of £4.18 million over 10 years.**"

Migrating without disruption

Once the business case was signed off, Roehampton started its move to Microsoft Azure and Office 365, supported by Civica. Streamlining apps and services reduced the number of servers needed from 350 to 235. The university also moved from having a site licence for everything to a rationalised approach on Azure. Both efforts contribute to the cost savings being achieved.

To minimise disruption to staff and students, Patel's team worked with each department to gain agreement to the migration schedule. "**Civica understands the challenges and priorities in higher education,**" says Patel. "**They gave us a flexible migration timeline that let us work around significant events in the university calendar like clearing and exams.**"

Benefits beyond cost savings

As well as compelling cost savings, Roehampton's move to the cloud is delivering many other benefits. Infrastructure resilience had long been a top priority, leading to the development of a complex, high-maintenance data centre architecture.

"**Since moving to the cloud, resilience is far less of a concern, which has transformed the IT team's role and allowed individuals to develop new skills,**" says Patel. "**Now we can focus on adding value by improving the user experience and managing cybersecurity and GDPR compliance more closely**."

Moving to Office 365 and SharePoint has improved the experience for our staff and students, whilst OneDrive has revolutionised personal storage with increased capacity. Everyone has secure access to their files, emails and Office apps both on and off campus, using university and personal devices

Next under review as a candidate for roll-out is Microsoft Teams, which Patel expects could become a useful collaboration platform for staff and students.

Ongoing optimisation of the cloud environment

"**Migrating to the cloud has given Roehampton an IT platform for the future,**" says Patel. He points out, however, that maximising the benefits of the environment and its opex-based charging model depends on efficient management. "**That's why we're using the Civica Cloud Optimisation service,**" he says. "**It stops us falling into the trap of wasting our savings on unnecessary Azure run time, by helping us change the way we look at system usage.**"

So if the Civica service shows that a system is used during business hours only, Patel's team will negotiate with the owner to power it down at other times. "**Cloud Optimisation quickly enabled us to realise additional savings of £50,000, providing a return on investment of 35% against our annual cloud spend,**" says Patel. "**Figures like that help the business see the wisdom of the approach — and ensure we continue to get the best value from our cloud migration.**"

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