CASE 1 – WVD

A State University had long been planning to improve its technology infrastructure and virtual desktop user experience for faculty, staff, and students. Within 48 hours, the IT department pivoted its technology infrastructure to a scalable virtual desktop solution to support remote work. One of the key drivers in deciding on a Microsoft platform package—which included Azure and Windows Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI)—was the need to ensure that students and employees could access needed software for both classes and university operations to continue. The IT department found a viable solution that was not only scalable but also cost-effective, and improved the overall user experience.

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 health crisis, the University had been exploring new technology solutions to make virtual desktop accessibility and collaboration more feasible. The IT department had been working through challenges with their existing solution, which had a limited number of licenses for all users on the network.

The quality of the user experience was not sustainable over the long term in the new normal environment. "Once COVID-19 came, they realized that they were very quickly going to have to scale—literally overnight—to allow our students, faculty, and staff to be able to access staff machines, business applications, and lab software from classrooms.

Pivoting to a remote work environment

The IT department had 48 hours to pivot its technology infrastructure to a more cost-effective option that would give them more scalability and stability, support a large user base during a time of uncertainty, and increase communication university-wide—namely, Windows Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI).

Upon implementing Microsoft solutions, the university community responded positively and Windows VDI became a game-changer in how people work.

Provisioning quick, scalable support

The team needed to select a solution package that would allow for more licenses and adaptability.

The Windows VDI solution also enables the university to increase volume and load capacity, so that all users would have a more positive experience with remote connections from the beginning. The university also used the FSLogix app to provide persistent virtual desktops to users, which helps provide a sense of seamlessness and continuity. The IT team was able to swap machine types quickly and easily use the graphical user interface (GUI) and replicate a real-world environment.The upgraded version provides more granular controls, reporting, and more ease of administration. These new features have changed the way IT manages the service, as well as how users directly benefit from improved features.

Azure Monitor for Windows Virtual Desktop is also currently being used. This solution has been an integral tool in helping the IT department to quickly monitor computing resources. They can now proactively provision resources to accommodate workloads. This, in turn, builds confidence in the solutions across campus. So far, students, faculty, and staff have reported that they love the automatic Microsoft OneDrive integration and document sharing features.

BENEFITS/RESULTS

The investment in Microsoft solutions helped the IT division the University navigate future unknowns. With the university relying on a remote work environment for the foreseeable future, there is a need to continue to cut costs. Scaling back and scaling down in-person lab computing environments better supports the university financially—all while helping ensure that students can access the computing programs they need to continue with their academic progress.